SYSTEMIC INFLUENCES ON BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ADOLESCENTS’ CAREER DEVELOPMENT: ADOLESCENT AND PARENTAL PERSPECTIVES

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DECLARATION: In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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Summary

Currently, no career theories exist that sufficiently explain the career development of South Africa’s diverse population groups. Consequently, South African researchers have been entirely dependent on international, western-informed career theories. While such theories have taken on a more ethnocentric complexion in recent times, they remain essentially decontextualised for South Africa. Furthermore, although the influence of family and the significant roles of parents have been theoretically acknowledged as critical influences in adolescent career development, there is still a considerable lack of research in South Africa on this topic.

The present study therefore explored the perceptions of systemic influences on adolescent career development from the perspectives of both Black middle-class South African Grade 11 learners and their parents. The research was conceptualised within the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development and used its derivative instrument, the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI, Adolescent). The present study utilised a qualitative research method, using answers derived from the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets to inform semi-structured interviews. The data analysis procedure involved the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to qualitatively analyse data obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

Findings revealed a number of influences within the individual system (personality, values, abilities), social system (adolescents’ parents and teachers) and societal-environmental system (financial support, the opportunity to work overseas, geographical location, job availability, and the location of universities) that were acknowledged as having an influence on the career development of South African Black middle class adolescents. Each of these findings were explored and unpacked under the four
identified Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) superordinate themes of *Family Dynamics, Great Expectations, The Ghost of Apartheid* and *Coconuts Fall Far From the Tree*. Lastly, the limitations of the present study, as well as recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Black South African adolescents, career development, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), My System of Career Influences (MSCI), systemic influences, Systems Theory Framework (STF).
Chapter 1: Introduction

The present study explores the systems of influence on a sample of Black middle-class South African adolescents’ career development from the perspectives of Grade 11 learners and their parents. The following chapter will introduce the context in which the research was conducted by explaining South African demographics and socio-political and historical events, such as apartheid, and their potential influence on this research topic. Further, a current perspective on education in South Africa will be described, as well as the importance and effect of traditionally upheld Xhosa culture on the career development of the research participants. Lastly, the effects of Xhosa culture, families and sibship size on the emerging South African Black middle class, in particular, and career psychology in South Africa, in general, will be discussed, followed by an outline of structure of the study.

South Africa: Setting the Scene

The current study is located in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa. According to a mid-year estimate, South Africa has recently reached the population landmark of 50 million inhabitants, comprised of 79.4 percent Black, 9.2 percent White, 8.7 percent Coloured and 2.7 percent Indian/Asian South Africans (Stats SA, 2010). The county’s most spoken language is Xhosa (Stats SA, 2005) and in the latest population census, 82% of the Eastern Cape inhabitants selected Xhosa as their mother tongue (Stats SA, 2005). Additionally, 19.3 million of South Africa’s total population consist of Black South African males (Stats SA, 2010) and of this statistic, just over 52 000 individuals are in Grade 11 in the Eastern Cape (Department of Education, 2010). Black South Africans have the highest unemployment rate in both South Africa and the Eastern Cape. Further, based on an Eastern Cape survey from 2000 to 2007, Jacobs and Punt (2009) reported the mean monthly income for individuals residing in the Eastern Cape as lower than that of all other South African provinces for all population groups, with Black South Africans earning less than R1000 per month on average.
Therefore, in 2009 the Eastern Cape was classified as the poorest of all nine of South Africa’s provinces.

**Education in South Africa**

Primary and secondary education in South Africa consists of twelve grades, culminating in a national matriculation examination. Education is a constitutional right for all citizens; however, it is not free. Regardless of the payment requirement of mandatory school fees for public schooling in South Africa, the majority of youth are enrolled in school (Beutel & Anderson, 2008). Over 98% of White South African learners and over 95% of Black and Coloured South African learners of school age were enrolled in school during 2001 (Africa, Budlender and Mpetsheni; 2001). Further, a national report by the Department of Basic Education (2010) revealed that over 98% of South African adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 attended school in 2009.

Schools still remain racially segregated to a large extent (Beutel & Anderson, 2008) with White South African learners more likely to attend more expensive schools offering higher quality education than that received by Black South Africans. Consequently, Black South Africans have historically had to attend schools with access to fewer resources, higher student-teacher ratios, and lower student test scores and this is still the case today. Lastly, Black South African adolescents are less likely to complete secondary schooling than White South Africans (Beutel & Anderson, 2008; Crouch & Mabogoane 2001).

**The Legacy of Apartheid and the Emerging South African Black Middle Class**

South Africa is a currently a nation in transition (SACMEQ, 2010). Since the African National Congress assumed governance of South Africa in 1994, the country’s economy has experienced a renaissance (Johnson, 2006). However, even sixteen years after the abolition of the apartheid rule, during which time Black South Africans were discriminated against on the grounds of skin colour, the distinct urban-rural matrix of the country’s society is still
clear, with the global process of modernization affecting rural areas slowly. Further, South Africa’s rural population currently accounts for almost 41% of the total population (SACMEQ, 2010). However, despite more than 40% of Black South Africans being unemployed, a select group appear to be thriving financially. This group is represented by South Africa’s emerging Black middle class (Corcoran, 2008; Johnson, 2006).

Although general consensus regarding the criteria used to define a household as middle-class is yet to be established (Johnston, 2004), all definitions identify middle class households as having “secure living conditions without serious concerns about shelter, water and sanitation, and further identifying households that have the potential to contribute to economic growth and participate in modern markets” (Stats SA, 2009, p.3). According to a recent population survey by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2009), the criteria used to classify families within the middle class bracket was: a family which occupied formal housing, in which there was in-house access to running water. Further, electricity was used as the primary source for lights and cooking in such households, as well as the presence of a flush toilet and either a landline telephone or a cell phone being owned by a member of the household.

By 2006, the South African Black middle class, which stood at 3.3% of the total South African population in 1994, had grown to 7.8% of the total South African population (Johnson, 2006). Since such a figure is the latest available statistic released by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and is considerably outdated, this figure may have subsequently increased. Further, by 2006, 9.3 million South Africans accounted for the Black middle class, showing a significant increase from 6.3 million members in 2001 (SA Goodnews, 2008). By 2008, Black South Africans accounted for over half of consumer spending in South Africa (Corcoran, 2008). The growth of the emerging Black middle class has been attributed to better education and the affirmative action policies of the current
government, as well as by removing apartheid driven legislation which prohibited Black South Africans from owning property in suburbs exclusively reserved for whites, as well as limiting access to bank credit (Nyanto, 2006).

Providing a further understanding of the extent of the increased growth rate of the South African Black middle class over the last decade, Johnson (2006) reported that in 2006 the South African Black middle class comprised 20% of the country’s total consumer spending, while Stats SA (2006) found Black middle class households to equal the number of White middle-class households in South Africa. However, the majority of all middle-class households in South Africa are projected to be owned by Black South Africans by mid-year 2010 (Stats SA, 2006). A more recent survey confirming this projected growth since 2006 has yet to be released by Stats SA.

**Cultural Conflict in the Emerging Black Middle Class**

For many years, it was assumed that the emergence of a Black South African middle class would see a migration of such members towards suburbs traditionally inhabited by White South Africans (Wilson, 2006). However, the number of Black South African middle class members who have opted to relocate to Johannesburg’s traditionally White, middle class suburbs, for example, is fewer than half a million (Johnson, 2006). This figure is relatively low in comparison to the 1.6 million individuals who remain in formal settlements (i.e. legally occupied land adhering to governmental building codes, consisting of housing or flats and receiving basic service delivery) by choice (Johnson, 2006). Further, it has been reported that 75% of the emerging Black South African middle class continues to reside in formal settlements for social and cultural reasons (Wilson, 2006).

Although the emerging Black South African middle class have generally experienced financial prosperity over the past two decades, such growth has not been problem-free and it has created a dilemma amongst such members. Firstly, members of the Black middle class
have experienced an increasing division between themselves and the communities in which they grew up, as traditional Black societies generally perceive the emergence of the Black middle class as a form of Westernisation, threatening ancestral beliefs and values (Wilson, 2006). Secondly, cultural differences have prevented this group from fully integrating into traditional White societies. Therefore, a cultural tug-of-war between traditional Black culture and White culture appears to have become established, regardless of whether members of the South African Black middle class reside in formal settlements or relocate to traditional White suburbs (Ikalafeng, 1996; Rudwick, 2008).

As the South African Black middle class negotiates the adoption of elements of Western culture, while upholding traditional African culture, a further intrafamilial dynamic has emerged between parents and their Western-influenced children (Ikalafeng, 1996; Rudwick, 2008). According to Thuli (as cited in Ikalafeng, 1996), Black South African children in middle-class households are raised in a different manner from their traditional Black South African counterparts of a lower socioeconomic status. Thuli elaborates that it is necessary for such parents to adopt a mindset change in order to accommodate the differing cultural expectations of their children.

This change in cultural expectations has been informed by the pursuit of a secondary form of culture by many South African Black middle class youth namely, youth culture. Youth culture may be understood as an age-bound world of thought held by youth, distinguishable from the culture of the larger adult society in which youth find themselves, influenced primarily by western modernity (Davies, 1971; Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Therefore, South African Black middle class youth entering formerly designated ‘Model-C’ schools (traditionally White, urban middle class schools) are continually negotiating developmental stages in which there is a need to experience a feeling of belonging, as well as to form a part of the broader youth culture within this group (Bembe, 2006).
A conflict arises in that the broader youth culture ascribed to in such schools is not necessarily congruent with the traditional cultural heritage instilled by parents of the South African Black middle class. Indicative of the traditional Xhosa culture of collectivism and community is the strong commitment generally shown by Xhosa individuals to the family as a social institution (Viljoen, 1994). According to Greef and Laubser (2008), Xhosa families traditionally attach a high value to family, and the relationship between family members is viewed as an essential source of support.

One concept capturing the sense of interdependence and interconnectedness of the Xhosa culture is called ‘ubuntu’ (Lane, 2000). Ubuntu is essentially an African philosophy of humanism, meaning ‘personhood’, ‘humanity’ or ‘humanness’ (Bandawe, 2005). The core philosophy of ubuntu is “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”, meaning “a person is a person only through other people” (Gylseth, 2008). This saying illuminates the communal embeddedness and connectedness of the members of the Xhosa culture, as well as the unifying idea of a community built upon respectful, empathic, interdependent relationships. (Bandawe, 2005; Du Plessis, 2001; Outwater, Abrahams, & Campbell, 2005).

However, for a number of South African Black middle class members currently residing in urban areas away from extended families and previously employed social support systems, the concept of ubuntu is being tested. Further, by attending Model-C schools, Black middle class South African adolescents are forced to make a choice between either:

a) adopting the westernised youth culture of the school and distancing themselves from their own traditional cultures; or

b) upholding their cultural heritage in westernised schools which do not perceive Black learners experiences in their cultural contexts (Akande, 2010).
The latter of the two choices appears to be the option more often chosen by South African Black middle class youth, as research suggests that the influence of traditional values and cultural norms on Black South African adolescents is gradually diminishing (Kamper, Badenhorst, & Steyn, 2009). A further indication of this phenomenon has been in the form of a steady language shift among many South Africans since 1994, particularly from the indigenous African languages to English in urban Black communities (Deumert, 2010). This shift is not affecting the total South African population, but is restricted to relatively well-defined subgroups (Deumert, 2010). At the centre of this language shift appears to be the youth members of the South African Black middle class, many of which have become monolingual, proficient in only English (Mesthrie, 2008).

**Families, Sibship Size and Career Development**

The family is an influence which has been found to significantly impact on the career development of adolescents at both an international level (Diemer, 2007; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Halpern, 2005; Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson, & Zane, 2007; Palos & Drobot, 2010; Schultheiss, 2006; Turner et al., 2006) and at a national level (Kuit, 2006; Maite, 2008; Sher, 2000). Interestingly, a clear negative effect of sibship size (the number of children produced by a pair of parents) on children's career development and educational attainment has been found (Yu, 2009). A widely accepted reason for this adverse effect is the resource-dilution hypothesis (Blake, 1989; Downey 1995), where ‘resources’ (including non-material as well as material assets) decrease in efficacy as family size increases. According to Downey (1995), material resources such as household computers and school and university tuition fees decrease in efficacy more quickly with sibship size than non-material resources. Such material resources directly impact on adolescents’ career development (Steelman, Powell, Werum, & Carter, 2002). Non-material resources, such as parental attention and emotional support, indirectly affect adolescents’ career development, as they have been
linked to child and adolescent intellectual development (Yu, 2009).

Traditionally, fewer children per family have been recorded by White South Africans in comparison to Black South Africans (Ziehl, 2001). By 1990, Black fertility, as measured by the total fertility rate of Black South African families, was between 4 and 4.5, whereas the White South African total fertility rate was 1.9 (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1993; Swartz, 2002). According to Moser (1996), in response to dire socioeconomic status, as well as inherited poverty, the poor are often forced to employ one of their greatest assets, additional labour (including child, adolescent and adult labour). Further, many children who are not used for child labour may still be understood as key components of additional family income, as such children are often given household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and running errands to ensure that both parents are able to work, essentially increasing the family’s income. Therefore, many rural Black South African families arguably still consider children as financial assets. However, a mindset shift of children now being considered financial liabilities by members of the South African Black middle class has been noted by Russel (2003), as indicated by a gradual transition of such members from a traditional extended system towards a nuclear system. According to Russel, “there is a shared pressure to reduce family size as child labour becomes taboo and as bringing up children becomes expensive and difficult to manage with an increasing proportion of women in work” (p. 170). The effects of such pressure is evidenced by Udjo (2008), who reported that the total fertility rate of an emerging South African Black middle class female had declined to between two and three children by the end of her reproductive life.

**Transcending Traditional Career Barriers: The Future of Career Psychology**

According to a recent survey by Stats SA (2009), the quality of education obtained by White South Africans was generally higher than that obtained by Black South Africans. In support of such findings, van der Berg (2006) reported significant discrepancies in the
educational quality among South African schools, based on the population demographics of the learners attending such schools. Further, it has been found that the difference in quality of education at school is likely to be less for those who live in households with a middle-class standard of living (Stats SA, 2009). Therefore, South African Black middle class adolescents are expected to experience a greater quality of education than Black South Africans of a lower socioeconomic status. As such, they represent a select group of Black South African adolescents who have an opportunity to transcend this traditional career barrier. Such findings by Stats SA (2009) are expected to have clear implications for the direction of career psychology in South Africa in order to accurately account for, understand and remain cognisant of the effects of continuing racial discrepancy among South African race groups and future career decisions.

A debate exists regarding the future of the direction of career psychology (McMahon & Watson, 2009). A movement towards qualitative, narrative and storied approaches informed by the constructivist worldview has been suggested at both the international and national level (McMahon & Watson, 2009). In the past, career development research has been primarily governed by a paradigm originating out of the modern era that is largely quantitative in nature (Savickas, 2001). Such research has provided career psychology with a thorough, quantifiable understanding of career development and behaviour. Consequently, career development research has continued to respond less enthusiastically and at a slower pace to the impact of constructivism (Savickas, 2001).

Concerns have been expressed by McMahon and Watson (2009) that exclusive use of quantitative research methodologies may be restrictive in terms of their ability to accommodate and respond to the growing complexity of research topics emerging in 21st century society. In support of this concern, Palladino Schultheiss (2005) concludes that traditional trait-factor approaches are limited in their ability to appropriately describe and
understand the sociocultural, economic and political variables impacting on the manner in which communities and individuals attribute meaning to their careers in contemporary society. This view is congruent with the general debate in South African career psychology, as proposals offered at the national level for progress in this regard are consistent with the international movement to develop practices, theory and research informed by the constructivist worldview (McMahon & Watson, 2009). This argument provides a rationale for the choice of the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006a) as the main theoretical framework for the present study (as would be evident in the following chapter).

Structure of the Treatise

Chapter 1 has introduced the broader context to the present research, describing current South African demographics and the impact of influential past events on this study. Education in South Africa was also described, as well as the potential impact of Xhosa culture on the research participants’ career development. In Chapter 2 (Theoretical Framework) the theoretical underpinnings of the research topic will be delineated. To achieve this, the term career will be discussed, followed by a chronological account of career development theories leading up to current career development perspectives. Secondly, the chapter will discuss the shift from positivism to constructivism, as well as systems theory. Finally, the theoretical framework of the study, the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006a), will be explained, followed by a discussion about the interrelationship between career development theory and its practice.

Chapter 3 reviews both international and national research over the last two decades within the identified area of the present research (i.e., the career development of South African Black male adolescents). The dominant trends in research focus and methodology will be explored while embedded within the structure of a systemic framework. After
describing trends, the review identifies previously unexplored career research areas, in particular those which the current study aims to address.

In Chapter 4 the research methodology will be discussed. Firstly, the research design will be outlined, including the research aims and a description of the population and sampling method. Secondly, the process of data collection will be explained in detail, followed by an in-depth account of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the method of analysis used to examine, explore and interpret the research data.

Chapter 5 will present and discuss the findings related to the systems of influence on Black middle-class South African adolescent learners’ career development from the perspectives of both the learners and their parents. Lastly, Chapter 6 will offer a conclusion of the research findings, as well as the identification of the research limitations and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of the theoretical underpinnings of the research topic. Firstly, the term career will be discussed, followed by the temporal delineation of past career development theories leading up to current career development perspectives. Secondly, the shift from positivism to constructivism and systems theory will be briefly discussed. Finally, the Systems Theory Framework work (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a) of career development which forms the theoretical basis of the study will be explained, as well as the bridging of career development theory and its practice.

Career development theory is still within its infancy (Patton & McMahon, 2006b). While theoretical propositions and models have multiplied over the last half-century, conclusions within the career literature generally agree that career theory remains incomplete, inadequate, incoherent and lacking in comprehensiveness (Savickas, 2002). A primary reason for such theoretical disparity are the ongoing attempts to successfully operationally define the term career (Brown & Lent, 2005; Savickas, 2002).

Owing to no single definition of career, it has become a term which is understood differentially, leading to a lack in conceptual clarity, multiple meanings, ambiguity and the prevention of a common ground in thinking in this field (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). However, one of the most widely accepted definitions of career remains that offered by Super (1960). According to Super, a career may be defined as “the sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his pre-occupational, occupational, and post-occupational life” (p. 20). Career development can therefore be understood as the overall constellation of sociological, psychological, educational, economic, physical and chance factors that combine to shape individuals’ careers over a life span (Schultze & Miller, 2004). In addition to these factors, cultural background is a key influence that assists in the shaping of an individual’s career choices (Brown, 2007; Leong, Hardin, & Gupta, 2007).
Career development theory was born with the publication of Parsons’ (1909) book, *Choosing a Vocation*, and has evolved over its fairly short history from trait and factor theories towards a more holistic and developmental perspective (McIlveen & Patton, 2006; Patton & McMahon, 2006a). Traditional trait and factor theories operated according to the assumptions that career choice relied on the accommodation and matching of two primary factors namely, (1) an accurate knowledge of self by the individual (including interests, values, personality), and (2) a thorough knowledge of job specifications (Punch, 2005). Despite a century passing since Parsons’ foundational principles, it has been argued that Parsons’ ideas would not seem out of place in a contemporary text on career assessment (McIlveen & Patton, 2006). For example, Holland’s (1997) theory of vocational personalities and work environments and his career assessment instrument the Self-Directed Search which promotes a process of matching individuals and occupations is recognised internationally as one of the most widely applied theories.

In order to understand the evolution of career development theory, key career constructs from the twentieth century until the present will now be discussed. Firstly, the work of Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) will be explained, followed by a description of Super’s theory of career choice (1954) which was developed shortly thereafter. Such developmental stage theories were specifically chosen in order to understand the developmental levels through which learners’ progress and in which the research participants are currently located. Secondly, the gradual shift from positivism to constructivism and its implications for career development theory will be explored. Finally, the relationship between constructivism and systems theory will be described, leading to the introduction of the Systems Theory Framework (STF; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a).
Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma

The work of Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) represented one of the earliest departures from more static trait and factor theories. Furthermore, Ginzberg et al. provide a vital contribution to career developmental theory as theirs was the first theory to focus on career choice from a developmental viewpoint (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). According to Ginzberg et al., career choice is a developmental process beginning in early childhood, and progressing through three broad stages before concluding with career choice in early adulthood.

During the fantasy stage, a child is able to freely pursue any career choice. In doing so, the child is able to identify preferred activities and relate these to future career choices. The following stage, the tentative stage, begins during an individual’s preteen years and continues throughout the individual’s secondary education. During this maturational stage, individuals are able to further refine their interests in, values of and capacity for a specific career choice (Ginzberg et al., 1951).

Finally, the realistic stage, which spans from mid-adolescence until young adulthood, marks the period in which an individual has “reached the point of integrating likes and dislikes with capabilities and tempering these two values with society’s and personal values” (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 29). The individual then begins to implement these tentative career decisions, constantly evaluating feedback until crystallization occurs and a career choice is made (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). A criticism of such a theory that has impacted its longevity and utility is that it did not encompass a lifespan perspective (Watson & McMahon, 2005).
**Super’s Theory of Career Choice**

Following Ginzberg et al.’s early career developmental theory, Super’s (1954) theory of career choice emerged. This theory had major implications for the ultimate transformation of career development theory. Super’s theory states that occupational aspirations are partially determined by an individual’s self-concept, meaning that individuals attempt to implement and express their self-concept through the career they choose (Reardon, Lenz, Sampson & Peterson, 2000; Watson & Stead, 2006). Furthermore, individuals’ self-concepts vary as a function of the stage of career development they are in. Thus, the career development of an individual is the process of developing and implementing a self-concept (Schultheiss, 2005; Walsh & Osipow, 1995).

According to Super’s (1990; Super, Savickas & Super, 1996) life span life space career development theory, adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 years, who are situated within his *Exploration stage*, would be expected to have already successfully negotiated the *Growth stage* (occupying the time period from birth up until age 14 years). During this Growth stage major developmental tasks include developing a self-concept and moving away from a play orientation towards a work orientation (Brown, 2007). According to Super, Savickas and Super (1996), the self-concept is fundamental to career development and is described as the culmination of the interaction between individuals and their environments. Super’s theory further states that occupational aspirations are partially determined by an individual’s self-concept, meaning that individuals attempt to implement and express their self-concept through the career chosen (Reardon, Lenz, Sampson & Peterson, 2000; Watson & Stead, 2006).

While this may be true, careers are also constructed within a social context and career development can be viewed in terms of an individual’s constant and recursive social adaptation to changing circumstances (Savickas, 2005b). Thus, the development of the self-
concept is not a static phenomenon but rather an ongoing process which is subject to changes which may either occur gradually and over long periods of time, or abruptly as people and situations change (Zunker, 2002). It could be argued that the majority of South Africans have been unable to express their self-concepts through their chosen career paths; as such choices were informed by a plethora of intrapersonal, interpersonal and societal influences.

In Super’s stage of Exploration, individuals gather more explicit information about themselves and the work environment (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006), while the stereotypes learned during the Growth stage become further refined. Adolescents are therefore expected to develop realistic self-concepts and to implement their career preferences through the exploration and testing of various life roles (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

As information regarding specific careers is obtained, individuals identify corresponding interests and abilities in an effort to employ their self-concept in both the work place and other life roles (Super, 1957). Initially, tentative choices that incorporate an adolescent’s interests, abilities and needs are tested in academic coursework, fantasy, volunteer work or by shadowing others in the workplace until the individual’s general preferences have been converted into a specific choice through a process of information gathering. Individuals then act on this information by matching their interests and capabilities to careers in an effort to implement their self-concept at work and in other life roles. This process is known as crystallization (Brown, 2007; Patton & McMahon, 2006a; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996).

According to Gibson (2004), the career images that are formulated during this stage are likely to arise from contact and association with individuals in part-time work experiences, specific jobs and through media material. Similar to the Growth stage, career stereotypes held by adolescents are often reinforced through visual images of employees engaging in
different careers. First-time entrants to the labour market may find such visual images particularly relevant. These images assist with the shaping of perceptions about career roles in particular careers and lay the foundation for a young adult's set of career norms (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006; Gibson, 2004).

During the subsequent Establishment Stage, individuals focus their attention towards the advancement of their chosen career. Efforts are made in order to establish a secure work environment with the prospect for progression and promotions (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). During the penultimate Maintenance Stage, individuals shift their focus towards preserving their self-concept and current job status. Career choices encountered during this stage include whether or not to remain at one’s current company or even within one’s chosen career. Further uncertainties typically present towards the end of this stage in which individuals question whether or not they are capable of competing in a market of more youthful individuals (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006).

During the final Disengagement Stage, individuals devote their focus primarily towards the development of a self-concept and self-image that is independent of and separate from their careers (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). According to Brewington and Nassar-McMillan (2000), the aging of the workforce, recent advances in health care, and the desire to remain active in the workplace longer than the expected age of retirement, suggest that individuals may extend the Maintenance Stage and delay the Disengagement Stage, unlike previous generations.

Super (1990) recognised that contextual factors affected each individual differently and incorporated this fact into his career development theory via the inclusion of a 'life-space' component. Further, Super believed that individuals have different life spaces owing to situational factors (e.g., residential neighbourhood, family, economic policies, gender or racial bias) and individual factors (e.g., personal interests, needs, values). As a result of each
individual’s unique combination of individual and situational influences, life-role self-concepts are shaped by successfully managing personal career development tasks (Super, 1990).

Super (1980) identified nine primary life roles, namely: student, child, worker, parent, partner, citizen, leisurite, homemaker, and pensioner. Additionally, he proposed that each of the primary life roles is played in a particular theatre, such as at home, at work, at school, or in the community. Nowadays, individuals are able to play multiple life roles in multiple theatres simultaneously. Learners, for example are able to play their roles as a student at school or at home, due to the availability of online internet resources.

**The Shift from Positivism to Constructivism**

From its infancy until the present times, career psychology has been largely committed to and rooted within the *positivist* philosophical approach. Followers of this approach, or scientific paradigm, regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts in which individuals may be objectively studied separately from their environments in a lawful, linear fashion and in which cause and effect can be inferred (Collin & Young, 1986; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, Hoshmand, 1989).

However, recently *constructivist* approaches to career theory and development have emerged in stark contrast to the positivist view. According to Savickas (1994), this emerging shift in philosophical positions reflects career researchers’ acknowledgement of the need to understand how the world of work fits into the lives of individuals, rather than fitting individuals into the world of work. Constructivism is the view “that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Savickas (1993) describes this movement towards the acceptance and employment of constructivist
approaches as a reaction to the existing status quo, that is:

While scientists were objectifying the world, [career] counsellors objectified interests, values, and abilities with inventories, and used these inventories to guide people to where they fit in organizations. Thus, career development professionals participated fully in the societal move to increase domination of the subjective by the objective (p. 206).

Therefore, while trait and factor theories are arguably still applicable and widely used within many westernised contexts, they fail to sufficiently explain career development, as well as to account for broader systemic influences on career decision-making processes. This is particularly the case within the South African context. According to Watson (2000), South African career research and practice has reached a theoretical crossroad after decades of career research that has resulted in “much dust but in little clarity about what the major research direction in South Africa should be” (p. 3). One of the primary reasons for reaching this crossroad is that existing career theories have mostly been developed for middle-class, western and privileged individuals (Blustein, McWhirter, & Perry, 2005).

Currently, most extant career theories cannot adequately explain the career development of South Africa’s diverse population groups. Consequently, South African researchers have been entirely dependent on international, western career theories. According to Watson and Stead (2002), while such theories have taken on a more ethnocentric complexion in recent times, they remain essentially decontextualised for South Africa. House (1999) argues that, rather than imposing a theoretically conceptualised reality which is constructed by the self-serving ideals of positivism and its practitioners with their attendant self-serving biases, it is necessary to review career development practices with the aim of empowering clients through their lived reality of the world and their context.
Over the past few decades a gradual shift by researchers is clearly evident from a positivist to constructivist approach to career development and theory. Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, career counselling and theory finds itself informed by two contrasting worldviews. One of the reasons for this has been the acceptance of key principles of constructivism, namely its emphasis on the proactive nature of human knowing and by acknowledging that individuals actively participate in the construction of their own reality (Patton, 2007).

Another notable shift has been apparent in the manner in which career counsellors have begun to operate from a constructionist perspective. As a consequence, career counsellors have become far less directive, provide less information, and have assumed the roles of facilitators in the process of exploration and restructuring (Peavy, 1998). During this process, counsellors and clients form a united front in order to construct and reconstruct meanings which are considered important in the client’s life. This process is achieved through a number of procedures, such as the sharing of information, accurate interpretation, provision of a supportive environment and structure, encouragement, and challenging of the client (Granvold, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 2006b). All this represents a shift away from the traditional positivistic desire to ‘fix’ the presenting problem towards a constructionist approach of “structural/process orientation” (Granvold, 1996, p. 348). Operating according to this latter orientation, career counsellors now explore the personal meanings ascribed by clients to their problem, as well as possible new meanings.

At the turn of the 21st century, Savickas (2001) attempted to rework Super’s (1957) theory so that it would be more relevant to an adapting society and reflect the influence of the constructivist worldview (Savickas, 2005b). The constructivist worldview differs from that of social constructionism. According to Young and Collin (2004), the former focuses primarily on “meaning making and the constructing of the social and psychological worlds
through individual cognitive processes, while the latter emphasises that the social and psychological worlds are made real (constructed) through social processes and interaction” (p. 375). Savickas' career construction theory used social constructionism “as a metatheory to further this integrative approach to understanding career behaviour” (Patton, 2007, p. 40).

In particular, Savickas (2005b) argued that the ever changing global economy produces new questions surrounding career development, particularly that of “how individuals can negotiate a lifetime of job changes without losing their sense of self or social identity” (Savickas, 2005b, p. 41). According to Savickas (2005b), career construction theory responds to the requirements of today’s mobile workers who experience “a restructuring of occupations, transformation of the labor force, and multicultural imperatives” (p. 41). The reshaping of essential facets of the career world makes it progressively more difficult to understand careers using only career development models that stress commitment, permanence and stability rather than fluidity and mobility (Savickas, 2005b).

**Constructivism Meets Systems Theory**

The principles of constructivism and systems theory have been developed from a similar worldview (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). According to Brown and Brooks (2002, p. 14), there are four key assumptions underlying the emerging constructivist position in career development which are also clearly compatible with systems theory, namely:

1. All aspects of the universe are interconnected; it is impossible to separate figure from ground, subject from object, and people from their environments.
2. There are no absolutes; thus human functioning cannot be reduced to laws or principles, and cause and effect cannot be inferred.
3. Human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs.
4. The subjective frame of reference of human beings is the only legitimate source of knowledge. Events occur outside human beings. As individuals
understand their environments and participate in these events, they define themselves and their environments.

Consistent with the worldview of constructivism, systems theory stresses holism and interconnectedness, rather than focusing on individual parts. Therefore, individuals cannot be viewed in isolation from their context, and the understanding of career behaviour as occurring in a linear sequence is less appropriate (Patton & McMahon, 2006b). Knowledge is seen as being constructed within the individual, as well as being relative to that individual’s experience, and knowledge can therefore not be taught. Thus, to an extent each individual must create their own personal career theory, as theories cannot be accurately applied to individuals (Patton & McMahon, 2006b).

As a consequence of individuals actively participating in the creation of their own reality and of human knowing being proactive (Patton & McMahon, 2006a), career counselling occurs through the use of language and dialogue with the counsellor (Peavy, 2004). Knowledge is shaped through the use of dialogue between the career counsellor and the client. The client is most appropriately accommodated through narrative approaches in constructivist counselling (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). The process of dialogue between career counsellor and client in which a new reality is constructed is termed co-construction. Therefore, individuals construct the story of their careers through language (Patton & McMahon, 2006).

According to Patton and McMahon (1999), stories or narratives were born out of systems theory thinking, with the concept of story being derived from Bateson (1979) who defined it as the manner in which an individual is able to explain the relevance of a specific sequence of connectedness in that individual’s life. Through stories individuals are able to attach meaning to their lives, construct their identities from the meanings available within their culture (McLeod, 1996), uncover life-patterns and themes, and forge interconnections
between previously unconnected events (Patton & McMahon, 2006b).

McIlveen and Patton (2006) argue that what is needed in career psychology is an approach to career development that seeks to open new vistas for the client that surpass the hackneyed diagnostic process according to interests, needs, values and abilities. Furthermore, it is equally important that such an approach is both reflexively and critically aware of its own discursive practices as well as being able to “integrate the narratives and discursive engagement of practitioner-in-context and client-in-context” (McIlveen & Patton, p.15).

As a result of the changing conceptions of career, Savickas (1993) recommends that the practice of career counselling moves from merely seeking truth towards participation in conversations, and that it moves from objectivity to perspectivity in order to keep pace with the movement towards a postmodern society. Since constructivism represents an epistemologic stance stressing self-organizing and proactive knowing, Patton and McMahon (2006a) argue that it provides a perspective from which to conceptualize changing notions of career in postmodern society. Included within such changing notions are the importance placed by individuals on becoming more independent when making meaning of the place of work in their lives and in self-supervising their careers (Richardson, 1996).

The constructivist approach emphasizes not only the active role of the individual in the collaborative career counselling process but it also emphasises a focus on a holistic approach to life-career and the encouragement of individuals by the counsellor to reflect on, reorient and revise their life-career relationship (McMahon & Patton, 2002; Patton & McMahon, 2006b).
The Systems Theory Framework

Career development theories have also been critiqued for their particular failure to account for diversity within populations and for not allowing an individual’s career decisions to be understood within the context in which such decisions are made (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). According to Stead (2004), career development theories are culturally constructed and “seldom demonstrate an in-depth perspective of how cultural issues play a role in career choice and career decision-making” (p. 397).

Cook, Heppner and O’Brien (2005) further highlight this existing cultural disparity by stating that career theories were developed under the impression that the average individual was young, Caucasian, male and ethnically homogeneous. However, recent recognition of the influence of culture on career development has raised concern about the cultural validity of career developmental practices from both theoretical and practical perspectives (Armstrong, 2009; Leong & Brown, 1995). In response to such critiques, as well as to calls for career theories which acknowledge the context in which career development occurs and in which career decisions are made, the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006a) of career development was developed. Unlike earlier positivistic career theory frameworks, the STF is positioned within a constructivist worldview and thus takes into account contextual influences as well as intrapersonal influences on individuals’ career development (McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2005).

The STF is considered as constructivist in its approach because of its emphasis on the individual and the manner in which it is able to depict the various systemic influences on an individual’s career development. Watson and McMahon (2004) argue that the disparate nature of the career literature has led to calls for a holistic theoretical structure in order to understand career development. One of the functions of the STF has been to act as a vehicle within which it is able to operationalise constructivist and social constructionist theories of
career (Patton, 2007). It has been further argued that the STF of career development provides such a structure. The STF was not designed to be a theory of career development; rather, systems theory was introduced as the basis for an overarching, or metatheoretical, framework within which all concepts of career development described in the plethora of career theories can be usefully positioned and utilized in theory and practice (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005b, p. 7).

As a metatheoretical framework, the STF represents the multitude of influences on individuals’ career development and it has been welcomed by many as a bridge between traditional career theory and qualitative approaches (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the STF offers a framework which provides the potential to strengthen congruence between theory and practice (Patton, 2007; Savickas, 2005b). Owing to its central focus on the individual, constructs of existing theories remain relevant as they apply to each individual, with each individual constructing his or her own meaning of career (Patton, 2007). Since the STF is an overarching framework, it is holistic and allows for new or revised theoretical developments to be accommodated along with existing theories. Thus, according to Watson and McMahon (2004), the STF provides the breadth necessary to unite extant career theories, while individual career theories provide the depth needed to account for specific concepts.

The STF of career development, consistent with the constructivist worldview, represents a metatheoretical account of career development which calls for changes in the nature of career counselling. Presented as a framework of influences, the STF clearly illustrates both the content and process of career development, as well as providing a map which is able to direct career counselling and assist in guiding the co-construction process involved in the telling of career stories (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2004). The term influence was deliberately chosen by the developers of the STF as it does not assume positive
or negative connotations but rather affords individuals the opportunity to ascribe their own meaning to each influence (Patton, 2007). Furthermore, the term is also dynamic in that it is capable of reflecting both process and content components of career theory (McMahon, Patton, & Watson). There are two types of influences described in the STF, namely content influences and process influences. Content influences include both intrapersonal variables and contextual variables. Intrapersonal variables include gender, personality, age and abilities, while contextual variables comprise of social influences, such as family and environmental-societal influences such as geographic location. These influences are represented in the STF as three interconnected systems, namely the individual system, the social system, and the environmental-societal system (McMahon, Patton, & Watson).

Three process influences, specifically recursiveness, change over time and chance, are described within the STF. The first process influence emphasises how recursive interaction contributes to the macro process of change over time and the micro process of career decision making (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2004). The second process influence is the recursive interaction between the individual and the context, as well as within the individual. The final process influence represented is chance (McMahon, Patton & Watson). Significantly, both content and process influences are embedded within a temporal context in order to incorporate past, present and future considerations in individuals’ career development.

The Individual, Social and Environmental-Societal Systems of the STF

Situated at the heart of the STF is the individual system (see Figure 1). The individual system is comprised of a range of intrapersonal influences such as age, gender, abilities, personalities, interests and sexual orientation. According to the STF, the individual is a system in its own right and has various subsystems comprised of intrapersonal influences (McMahon, 2005). Importantly, each individual as a system does not live in isolation from one another, but rather as a component of a much larger contextual system. Therefore, the
individual can be seen as both a system and a subsystem. Similarly, the contextual system is also comprised of subsystems, specifically the social system and the environmental-societal system (McMahon, 2005).

The social system (see Figure 2) refers to the other people systems with which individuals interact (for example, peers, family, and educational institutions; McMahon & Watson, 2008). The social system and the individual system (Figure 2) are located within the broader environmental-societal system (included in a more holistic Figure 3; McMahon & Watson, 2008).

![Figure 1: The Individual System](image)

Although the subsystems of the environmental-societal system (for example, globalisation and political decisions) may seem less directly related to individuals, they nonetheless have an influence on individual career development (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Each of the systems is clearly represented in Figure 3, the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999) of career development.
Figure 3: Individual, Social and Societal-Environmental Systems

The STF views individuals as constructing their own future and as being self-organising. Therefore, the STF regards the individual, rather than career theory, as essential to understanding career development (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). Consequently, individuals are considered as experts in their own lives, and the STF assumes that each individual possesses the inherent skills, beliefs, competencies, values, abilities and commitments which are necessary to assist in achieving a more preferred future (McMahon, 2005). At any given point in time, individuals could visually represent the interconnected constellation of influences on their career situation (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 1999).

The STF may be applied not only at the individual level but also at the practice level in order to illustrate the systemic contextual construction of practices such as career counselling, career development programs in schools and career research. For example, Figure 4 specifically illustrates the complexity of the career counselling process, as well as its place within the social and environmental-societal systems. The figure depicts how both the career client and counsellor exist within (and are influenced by) an ever-changing system of influences. Therefore, one of the roles of career counsellors is to be aware of their own career influences, so that they understand the influences relevant to their own career stories (Patton & McMahon, 2006b).
Viewed through the lens of the STF, career counselling represents the coming together of two individual systems of influence, those of the client and the counsellor. As a result of the meeting of two separate systems in career counselling, a new system namely the therapeutic system is formed. According to Patton and McMahon (2006b), “the boundaries
of each system must be permeable enough to allow a relationship to develop and dialogue and resulting meaning to occur, yet impermeable enough for both parties to maintain their individuality” (p. 158). Thus, it is vital that the boundary between the counsellor system and the client system is clearly established initially and maintained. However, as a result of the development of a relationship between individuals within the therapeutic system, the boundary between the client system and the counsellor system may become blurred (Patton & McMahon, 2006b).

It is therefore imperative that career counsellors have a clear understanding of their own narratives which have developed through interaction with their own system of influences (past, present and future) prior to facilitating the establishment of a client’s life story. Career counsellors who lose sight of their boundaries run the risk of manipulating, being manipulated by, or imposing their own values on clients (Patton & McMahon, 2006b). According to Peavy (2004), the maintenance of a systems theory perspective and the use of narratives enable diversity to be addressed through a dialogue centred on the client’s narrative. However, in order for successful career counselling to be achieved, the counsellor must be fully aware of the unique pattern of the systemic influences of each client, since all individuals interrelate with and belong to multiple groups (Peavy, 1998).

According to Kuit (2006), an advantage of not representing ‘culture’ as a specific systemic career influence in the STF is that “career counsellors and clients are invited to resist assuming and deploying generic notions of culture” (p. 26). Furthermore, Kuit proposes that the STF permits researchers to identify and recognise how locally negotiated cultural meanings “are constructed in and through experiences within particular individual, social and societal/ environmental systems without needing to position such systems inside or outside of reified cultural boundaries” (p. 26).
Resultantly, the STF lends itself comfortably for use as a qualitative assessment tool and is a fitting choice for this context-specific, culturally-embedded study. Having highlighted the importance of the STF and its various systems, as well as the need for a constructivist approach which is culturally inclusive, the following section of the chapter serves to describe how such theory will be put into practice.

**Bridging Theory and Practice**

An assessment tool which is a specific application of the STF is the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005a) qualitative career assessment process. The MSCI was developed “in response to calls for greater use of qualitative assessment, the complementary use of qualitative and quantitative assessment, the need for assessment tools that may be used across cultures, and the need for gathering contextual information” (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005b, p. 478).

The STF and its instrument, the MSCI, are invaluable in terms of the manner in which they are able to describe the influences on individuals’ career development occurring at both a micro and macro-level. Traditional career theories such as that of Super (1990; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996) provide an account of personality and of change over time in terms of career development stages respectively. Although traditional career theories are crucial to the depiction of influences at the macro-level, the STF provides the additional key description of the recursive interaction between the micro and macro influences. The MSCI, in particular, provides individuals with the opportunity to narrate their own unique career development stories by representing each of the influences on their careers in diagrammatic form, as well as explaining the interrelationships existing between such influences (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005b) and was employed as an instrument of data collection in the present study (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed description).
In conclusion, this chapter has delineated the theoretical underpinnings of the present study by providing a discussion of past career development theories leading up to current career development perspectives. Additionally, the shift in research trends from positivism to constructivism, as well as systems theory was explained. Lastly, the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006a) which forms the theoretical framework of the present study was introduced, followed by a focus on the interrelationship between career development theory and its practice.
Chapter 3: Research Review

This chapter reviews a sample of international and national research conducted into the career development of adolescents over a specific time period. First, international career research will be reviewed over a ten-year period from 2000 to 2010, since a significant amount of international research has been conducted over the last decade. Second, national research trends will be reviewed over a period extending from 1990 to 2010, as national research on the career development of adolescents in South Africa, particularly with regards to Black adolescent males, is limited.

In order to provide a systemic understanding of past adolescent career development research trends both internationally and at a national level, the research review will be structured according to the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). Therefore, research trends will be identified and categorised into the three systems of influence within the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development, namely the individual system, the social system, and the environmental-societal system. In addition, research related to the influence of chance will be presented. In doing so, previous career research is more easily organised and grouped in relation to the systems of influence focused on by particular studies. [The reader is referred to the previous chapter for a more detailed description of the STF].

Major career research capturing resources were employed in order to ensure that such trends were representative on all levels. In international research, the annual trends of career counselling and career development extending from 2000 to 2010 were surveyed using the yearly research reviews of The Career Development Quarterly as the primary capturing resource (Arbona, 2000; Chope, 2008; Dagley & Salter, 2004; Flores, Scott, Wang, Yakushho, McCloskey, Spencer, & Logan, 2003; Guindon & Richmond, 2005; Harrington, 2006; Luzzo & Wright MacGregor, 2001; Patton & McIlveen, 2009; Tien, 2007; Whiston &
Brecheisen, 2002). The researcher deemed such a decision appropriate as The Career Development Quarterly has been previously acknowledged as the only journal that has consistently and successively published reviews of practice and research in career counselling and career development, consisting of both book and journal formats, since 2000 (Kuit, 2006).

Of the 43 identified international adolescent career research studies from 2000 to 2010, a total of thirty-five studies adopted a quantitative methodology. Therefore, quantitative studies account for the majority (81%) of international adolescent career research over the past decade. While two of the forty-three international adolescent career studies adopted a triangulated research methodology approach, qualitative methodological approaches accounted for only 14% of all international adolescent career research. The present research review clearly indicates the continued trend of a reliance on quantitative research methodologies and positivistic career research, as well as a gap in qualitative, constructivist adolescent career research.

Consistent with the international research review, the researcher examined and compared the research methodologies of identified studies. Of the 23 identified national adolescent career studies from 1990 to 2010, only five studies adopted a qualitative research methodology. Therefore, similar to the international adolescent career research review, quantitative research methodologies accounted for the majority (78%) of national adolescent career research. Such a result is particularly disquieting, given the calls for context-specific, constructivist career research by international and national researchers (Savickas, 2003; Watson & McMahon, 2004). The following subsection of this research review chapter describes the international adolescent career development research for the period of 2000 to 2010.

**International Adolescent Career Research**

**Individual System**

Annual reviews from *The Career Development Quarterly*, focusing on the career development of adolescents and relating to the influences of the individual system, were identified. In congruence with the review conducted by Kuit (2006), studies relating to the individual system far outweighed the number of studies focused on social system or environmental-societal system influences between 2000 and 2010.

 Particularly evident from the identified individual system-related research was that the majority of these studies adopted a quantitative methodological approach, with few qualitative studies being conducted. Such a finding clearly illustrates the continuing dominance of the positivist approach to career research, as well as the lack of consideration of the specific contexts within which variables in such studies are ascribed significance (Glavin, 2004; Kuit, 2006; Watson, Duarte, & Glavin, 2005).
A gradual yet noticeable shift of focus towards the social influences on adolescent career development is evidenced in the decreasing ratio of studies that focus entirely on individual influences in comparison to those studies which place a primary or secondary focus on social, environmental and other contextual influences on adolescent career development. In a study conducted by Rogers, Creed and Glendon (2008), the role of personality in adolescent career planning and exploration was examined from a social cognitive perspective. The results of this study indicated that personality contributes to the career readiness actions of planning and exploration, as well as influencing the career decision-making process in adolescents. For example, Rogers, Creed and Glendon found that adolescents who are conscientious and open to experiences are more likely to engage in career planning. On conclusion of their study, Rogers, Creed and Glendon proposed that such career research findings highlight the value of integrative research approaches which explore the influences of both personality factors and contextual influences when attempting to understand individual career development.

Similarly, Hirschi, Niles, and Akos (2010) conducted a longitudinal study on 349 eighth grade Swiss adolescents. This study investigated the predictors and outcomes of active engagement in career preparation and also found adolescents’ personality traits to play a significant role in their career preparation, career exploration and career choices.

Lastly, in recent studies focusing specifically on the factors influencing male high school adolescents’ career aspirations, the results suggest that adolescent males place particular importance on the prestige and status attached to occupational choice, as well as to salary expectations (Helwig, 2008; Mei, Wei, & Newmeyer, 2008). A shift in focus will now be made from individual system influences on the career development of adolescents towards the social systemic influences on adolescents’ career development at an international level between 2000 and 2010.
Social System

A review of international research conducted between 2000 to 2010 revealed a general focus on the relationship between specific social system influences and career theoretical constructs. Further, such studies frequently focused on the child-parent relationship (e.g. Domene, Arim, & Young, 2007; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Maite, 2008; O’Brien, Friedman, Tipton, & Linn, 2000; Salami & Aremu, 2007; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002; Wong & Liu, 2010). Findings across these studies generally suggested that familial support, guidance and affirmation received during adolescence was an essential contributing factor towards promoting effective career development (Diemer, 2007; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Halpern, 2005; Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson, & Zane, 2007; Palos & Drobot, 2010; Schultheiss, 2006; Turner et al., 2006). Additionally, the family has been found to impress expectations and values on adolescents, shaping the development of adolescents’ internal values, skills and interests and often even superceding the internalised processes of the adolescents (Halpern, 2005). This implies that the manner in which adolescents experience, explore and make meaning of their subjective realities is undermined by what their families expect or deem important.

Bullington and Arbona (2001) also found social systemic influences such as familial support, familial guidance and familial expectations, as well as ethnicity to influence the career development of adolescents constituting minority groups. However, Kuit (2006) critiqued the manner in which studies (such as that conducted by Bullington and Arbona) are framed by modernist assumptions, focusing on decontextualised clusters of intrapersonal variables. According to Kuit, such studies “produce textual representations of research participants’ careers that fail to adequately account for the complexity of the socially embedded experiences of participants’ lives, career decision-making and career development” (p. 52).
Although the significant impact of parents on adolescent career development is acknowledged by a number of adolescent career development studies (e.g., Domene, Arim, & Young, 2007; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Maite, 2008; O’Brien, Friedman, Tipton, & Linn, 2000; Salami & Aremu, 2007; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002; Wong & Liu, 2010), few studies have investigated the manner in which parents influence adolescents’ career development. Furthermore, while some quantitative studies have recently been conducted in an attempt to explore specific parental influences on the career development of adolescents (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Ferry, Fouad, & Smith, 2000; Guay, Senecal, Gauthier, & Fernet, 2003; Keller & Whiston, 2008; Kracke, 1997; Neuenschwander, 2008), even fewer qualitative studies on parental influence have been conducted to date (Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001; Young et al., 2001).

The findings of several studies supported the STF’s concept of recursiveness and ongoing change (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of these terms) by providing evidence of the impact of parents’ and siblings’ relationships on an adolescent’s career path (Bardick & Bernes, 2005, Flores & Brien, 2002; Schultheiss, Palma, Predragovich, & Glasscock, 2002, Turner & Lapan, 2003; Whiston & Keller, 2004, Wong & Liu, 2010). In a quantitative study comprising of 1102 participants, Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson and Witco (2005) investigated parents’ perceptions of the roles they play in the career planning of learners. This study found that parents perceived their children as becoming better prepared for career planning as they grew older and that, as parents, they have a supportive and educative role in assisting with adolescents’ career planning.

Further, researchers have found that for many adolescents, particularly those who have grown up in collectivistic cultures, parents may already have a career path planned for the adolescent, such as taking over the family business, or parents may evoke feelings of shame and guilt if a specific career path is not followed (Miller & Brown, 2005; Young et al., 2001).
While the influence of parents has been demonstrated to be significant in adolescents’ career development, sibling and peer support have been suggested by Ali, McWhirter and Chronister (2005) as also impacting significantly on the career development of adolescents.

In a study comprising of 1843 adolescent participants that investigated the career-related decision difficulties of adolescents, an additional variable, namely the role of peer pressure, was found by Gati and Saka (2001) to significantly influence adolescents’ career development and career decision-making processes.

The career development of Mexican American adolescents in their final year of high school and the influence of contextual and social cognitive variables including nontraditional career self-efficacy (self-efficacy expectations with regard to nontraditional occupations), parental support, occupational barriers, acculturation, and traditionality were investigated by Flores and O’Brien (2002). This study found occupational barriers, such as financial constraints, to have a negative influence on the prestige of adolescents’ career choice. However, occupational barriers did not predict the level of career aspiration or traditionality of career choice. Additionally, Trusty (2002) examined the effects of high school subject choices and other contextual variables on the subsequent career paths of adolescents. Trusty (2002) found that learners opting for the subject choices of mathematics and science in high school generally achieved greater career success than those who did not. In a study investigating the influence of gender, parents’ education levels and perceived barriers on the educational aspirations of 186 Mexican American adolescents, Ojeda and Flores (2008) found a significant relationship between adolescent learners’ educational aspirations and their parents’ educational levels. Such results imply that a lack of parental education may be a career development barrier for adolescents.
Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, and Gallagher (2003) examined the role of perceived barriers and relational support in the education and careers of urban high school adolescents. Kenny et al. found familial support to be related to both behavioural and attitudinal indices of career aspirations, school engagement, expectations for career achievement, and importance of future employment. Similarly, Young et al. (2001) investigated twenty families’ career-relevant parent-child conversations over a six month period and found adolescent career development to be rooted within a relational context, including parenting, culture and identity.

Helwig’s (2008) quantitative, longitudinal career development study found that the primary career influence on adolescents was teachers and that adolescents’ parents also significantly influenced adolescents’ career development. Further, of the adolescents’ two parents, mothers were generally considered by adolescents as having the greatest influence on their career development.

Research findings further suggest that the variables of social class, socioeconomic status and the family environment into which an individual is born, significantly impact on the attainment of career-related knowledge and, thus, influence the career development of adolescents (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Blustein et al., 2002; Diemer & Hsieh, 2008; Hancock, 2009; Jordan & Pope 2001; Lindstrom et al, 2007). In a study exploring the influence of mothers on the academic expectations of their adolescents, Baker and Entwisle (2001) found that mothers with adolescents in middle-class schools had higher career expectations of their sons than mothers with adolescents attending working-class schools.

Lastly, Adragna’s (2009) study investigating the career choice and future plans of high school adolescents suggested no significant difference between the level of prestige for parent’s and the adolescent’s career aspirations. Additionally, Adragna found that, rather
than acting as a restriction, career barriers in adolescents’ lives act as an incentive to achieve more highly than their parents had. However, according to Bardick and Bernes (2005), while adolescents may have the inherent ability to achieve their career aspirations, high aspirations often fail to materialise due to inadequate resources to achieve them.

Studies during the period of 2000 to 2010 showed much emphasis on the influence of family members on the career development of adolescents. While such a finding echoes the importance of familial systemic influences on the adolescent, it is also evident that no studies have investigated other social influences such as newspapers, books and television. A shift in review focus will now be made to environmental-societal influences and how these may pertain to adolescent career development research between the research review period of 2000 to 2010.

**Environmental-Societal System**

The Career Development Quarterly (CDQ) annual reviews yielded far fewer studies focusing on environmental-societal influences on adolescent career development than research relating to the individual or social systems. Nevertheless, there were a number of identifiable studies focusing on environmental-societal influences. Embedded within specific studies not overtly researching environmental-societal influences was the exploration of factors influencing adolescent career development (Kuit, 2006). Such factors have included: exposure to previous employment (Hansen & Jarvis, 2000; Singh & Oztruk, 2000), the effects of community economic-related issues (Chisholm & Edmunds, 2001), person-environment fit (the degree to which a person or their personality is compatible with their career environment; Turner et al., 2006) and geographical location (Christmas-Best & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2001; Hancock, 2009). Furthermore, the findings of Hancock (2009) suggest that an adolescent’s horizons for career development are restricted by the adolescent’s geographic location and that adolescent males tend to consider acceptable
careers available within a nearby geographical vicinity.

Additionally, further studies revealing a focus on the impact of environmental-societal influences were found. For example, in a follow-up study of over 17,000 participants (born 12 years apart), Schoon and Parsons (2002) investigated the formation and realisation of adolescent career aspirations within a changing socio-historical context. This study focused on the labour market, global economic conditions and the impact of such variables on the future career aspirations of adolescents. Not only did this study reveal that the socio-historical context of adolescents play a key role in shaping their career development, but also that adolescents situated in higher social classes than others showed a positive correlation with their occupational attainment in the future.

Similarly, Daire, LaMothe and Fuller (2007) explored the differences between African American and White students regarding influences on high school completion, college attendance, and career choice. This study found that future income and future status were identified by African American adolescents as being a more significant influence on their career choices in comparison to responses by White adolescents. In a quantitative study investigating the role of career barriers in high school adolescents' career choice behaviour in Taiwan, Tien, Wang and Liu (2009) found that male adolescents perceived the pursuing of non-traditional careers as a greater career barrier than female adolescents.

**Chance**

Over and above the individual, social and societal-environmental systems, *chance* is a further influence identified within the STF. According to research, chance events significantly affect career development, influencing career transitions and career decision-making (Bright, Pryor, Chan, & Rijanto, 2009; Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005; Hirschi, 2010). In a quantitative study investigating the impact of chance events on the career development of adolescents, Bright, et al. (2009) found chance events such as unexpected
encouragement to have a positive impact on individuals’ career development, while unexpected negative personal events and negative work experiences were found to have a negative impact on career development.

Similarly, in a quantitative study investigating the influences on the career development of 772 Australian adolescent and college students, Bright, et al. (2005) found that positive chance events (e.g. winning a competition or lottery) and negative chance events (e.g. death of a family member or pet; contracting of an illness) were found to have an influence on the career decisions of 69.1% of participants. Further, the role of chance events in the school-to-work transition of 474 Swiss adolescents was also investigated in a quantitative study by Hirschi (2010). Sixty-five percent of the participants in this study reported chance events, such as unexpected encouragement, as having significantly impacted on their career transitions.

Summary

Of the international research investigating adolescent career development, the majority of studies focused primarily on Caucasian adolescent samples of middle to upper-middle socio-economic status. Such studies were conducted predominantly on American populations, with an equal focus on both male and female adolescents. Furthermore, international research has only focused on a limited number of systemic influences on adolescent career development within the individual, social and environmental-societal systems of the STF. A shift in focus will now be made from the exploration of international adolescent career research to national adolescent career research.

South African Adolescent Career Research

In response to calls to conceptualise adolescent career development in terms of the shifting social, environmental and societal influences in South Africa, there has been a gradual emergence of research acknowledging this need (Kuit, 2006). However, most South
African adolescent career research is still conducted in the form of positivist-empiricist, quantitative studies, echoing the dire need for more meaning-focused research to further understand South African adolescent career development from a systemic perspective. Attention will now be focused specifically on the individual system influences on the career development of Black South African male adolescents.

**Individual System**

South African studies from 1990 to 2010 relating to the individual system and focusing on adolescent male career development were identified. However, in contrast with international adolescent career research findings, individual influences on adolescents’ career development appears to be largely unexplored within the individual system at a national level. Such a statement is in contrast with the findings of Kuit (2006), who reported that research on intra-individual influences constituted the majority of South African career development research on adolescents, relative to that focused on social and environmental-societal influences. Although a number of studies, (Botha 1996; 1997) investigated research topics typically represented within the individual system, results of such studies found societal-environmental influences (e.g. sociopolitical history and socioeconomic status) to influence individual system factors such as career maturity and career identity.

In addition, there was a trend towards positivist-empiricist research, as the majority of studies conducted were quantitative in approach. Further, the interrelationship between individual system variables accounted for the majority of the studies. For instance, Watson, Foxcroft, Horn and Stead (1997) examined the occupational aspirations of Black South African adolescents and found the relationship between disadvantaged learners’ career aspirations to be unrealistic, given the labour market trends during this time. In a study by Eaton (2001), a sample of 862 adolescents between grades nine and eleven was used to determine the career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) of South African and
Australian learners. Results revealed an absence of gender differences in the career decision-making self-efficacy of South African high school learners students.

Similarly, Williams (2002) researched the CDMSE and career identity amongst Black South African senior high school learners, while Sibilanga (2003) explored the career maturity and career aspirations of Black South African adolescents in a rural community. In a further quantitative study exploring career decision-making self-efficacy, Muller (2005) investigated the CDMSE of 258 White and 258 Black South African adolescent males and females between grades nine and eleven. The study focused on the impact of the subject variables of gender and grade, as well as their combined impact on career decision-making self-efficacy. Consistent with the findings of Eaton (2001), an absence of gender differences in the career decision-making self-efficacy of male and female high school students confirmed previous national research in this regard.

According to Kuit (2006), “in contrast to international trends, national individual system-related studies have not significantly expanded their scope to include interrelationships between a range of variables” (p. 63). The above research findings demonstrate that the majority of national research on individual system influences has explored the career decision-making self-efficacy of South African adolescents and the impact of age and gender. Other potential influences within the individual system (e.g. personality, values, skills, physical attributes, and ethnicity) remain largely unexplored by researchers. The focus will now shift towards research exploring contextual social system influences on South African adolescents’ career development.

**Social System**

Between the period of 1990 and 2010 limited research has been conducted which has specifically investigated the impact of social influences on adolescent career development at a national level. A study conducted by Sher (2000) examined the impact of social factors on
adolescent career development. Sher investigated the influence of parental career interests on adolescents’ career choices. Findings from this study revealed that parents were identified by adolescents as playing the most influential role in adolescent career development. In a qualitative study exploring the nature and the extent of parental involvement in the career development of young adolescents through the perceptions of disadvantaged adolescents, Maite (2008) found parental involvement to significantly influence adolescent career development, as well as assisting with the development of adolescents’ career self-concepts and career self-efficacy.

While a number of studies have focused on the importance of social systemic influences such as cultural traditions on adolescent career development (for example, Maesela, 1994), the majority of such studies have adopted a quantitative research method. In a study of South African adolescents by Tyson and Stones (2002) research findings suggested that being an individual member of a broad cultural group is no longer an assurance that the individual will identify with that culture and its traditional values. Similar research findings by Kamper, Badenhorst and Steyn (2009) suggest that the influence of traditional values and cultural norms on Black South African adolescents is gradually diminishing. While the career development and career aspirations of Black South African adolescents has previously been found to be influenced by the legacy of apartheid (Botha, 1996), as well as labour market trends (Watson, Foxcroft, Horn, & Stead, 1997), Kamper, Badenhorst and Steyn’s (2009) research demonstrates that the career development of adolescents situated within an emerging Black South African middle class may not be impacted on by such influences. According to Kamper et al. (2009):

middle-class Black South African adolescents tend to share the general consumerism of South Africa's wealthy classes, and many are detached from the history of the struggle for political freedom... ....[and that] a general spirit of
optimism and independence exists, paired with a strong desire to escape the trappings of poverty and to fulfil their career and social expectations (p. 71).

In a quantitative, longitudinal study, Beutel and Anderson (2008) explored the educational expectations of South African parents and their children. These researchers found both parents and children in South Africa to hold high educational expectations regardless of race. Additionally, the results of this study suggested that many Black South African parents may compensate for lower socioeconomic conditions by maintaining high educational expectations for their children. Dullabh (2004) conducted a study which systemically explored the career development of South African adolescents in a children’s home. This study marked the first research in South Africa on adolescent career development which incorporated and implemented the Systems Theory Framework (STF) as its theoretical framework. Importantly, this study denoted not only the surfacing of qualitatively oriented career research in South Africa, but also the possibility of investigating the influence of multiple recursively interacting systems on career development within a diversity of contexts (Kuit, 2006). For example, parents, friends, teachers and reading were each found to have an impact on South African adolescents’ career development (McMahon, Watson, Foxcroft, & Dullabh, 2008).

A recent qualitative and systemically rich study conducted by Steyn, Badenhorst and Kamper (2010) indicated that a new, non-racial generation is emerging in South Africa. These researchers suggest that Black South African adolescents are currently facing a dilemma, not in the form of societal factors, but rather due to an ailing education system which is preventing the future career ideals of many South African adolescents. Cherian (1994) investigated the relationship between parental aspiration and academic achievement of 369 male Xhosa adolescents and 652 Xhosa female adolescents from broken and intact families. The results of this study suggested that Xhosa adolescents from intact families (i.e.
two parent homes) generally performed at a higher level academically than Xhosa adolescents from single-parent homes, with academic performance impacting on future adolescent career paths.

In a study conducted by Kuit (2006), the Systems Theory Framework (STF) was employed to investigate and co-construct representations of the career development of 70 Grade 11 South African male and female adolescents from middle socioeconomic status environments. Although this study reported findings obtained from a sample of White South African adolescents, such a study is noteworthy as it represents the second study to employ the STF in a research study at a national level. Findings from this study suggested individual influences (personality, interests and abilities), environmental-societal influences (finances, job availability, opportunities to work overseas and geographical location) and social system influences (family and friendships) to have a significant impact on the career development of the adolescents. Kuit’s research concluded that further collaborative enquiries between researchers and participants were necessary so that “career research will more fully embrace the reflexive position of turning on itself and critically examining its real effects for participants” (p. 178).

A shift in focus will now be made from social system influences on the career development of adolescents at a national level, towards the environmental-societal system influences on South African adolescents’ career development.

**Environmental-Societal System**

Career theory and research supports the role of environmental and societal influences on career development, such as globalisation, historical trends, the labour market, geographic location and socioeconomic status (Gottfredson, 1996; Kuit, 2006; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006; Stead, Els, & Fouad, 1999). However, in support of Kuit (2006), the present researcher found a scarcity of South African research that focuses on
the impact of environmental-societal influences on adolescent career development.

In South Africa, socio-political factors such as affirmative action were explored by Stead, Els and Fouad (2004) in a quantitative study consisting of 438 Black and White South African adolescents. This study explored perceived barriers of adolescent career development. The majority of adolescent participants did not perceive personal characteristics and gender discrimination as possible career barriers. However, ethnic or racial discrimination was identified by both Black and White adolescents as perceived career barriers. Further, owing to a general consensus by both Black and White adolescent participants that affirmative action hindered competent individuals from obtaining jobs and enabling Blacks, Black South Africans were perceived as a threat to future career opportunities by both Black and White participants.

One study of particular importance in relation to the gradual shift towards the acceptance of the need for qualitative research was Sifunda’s (2001) study which employed focus groups as a means of investigating career thinking and exploration in a sample of Black South African adolescents of lower socioeconomic status. Results from this study suggested that Black adolescent learners from under-resourced areas are marginalized, in that they do not receive the same exposure as their urban and suburban adolescent counterparts.

Botha (1996) researched the development of career identity among Xhosa-speaking adolescents and found that the shifting socio-political situation in South Africa after 1994 had a significant positive impact on Black South African adolescents’ career choices. In a later study, Botha and Ackerman (1997) further explored career identity development among Xhosa-speaking adolescents and found that Black adolescents in economically disadvantaged positions tend to aspire towards careers holding the promise of financial independence and security.
Socioeconomic influences have been studied in relation to their impact on adolescent career values and career aspirations by a number of researchers (Alexander, 1990; Cherian, 1994; Horn, 1995; Kuit, 2006; Maesela, 1994). Alexander (1990) explored the development of career maturity in adolescents from minority groups. On finding that such learners had lower levels of career maturity than other adolescents of the same age, Alexander recommended that “minderheid groep leerlinge, soos leerlinge in ander skole, behoort beslis aan ’n doelregtig en gestrukteerde beroepsvolwassenheidsontwikkeling program onderwerp te word” (p. 111; “minority students, like students in other schools should participate in purposeful, goal-directed and structured career development programs to enhance their career maturity”).

A recent qualitative study conducted by Buthelezi, Alexander and Seabi (2009) explored 12 adolescents’ perceived career challenges and needs in a disadvantaged context in South Africa. Buthelezi, et al. suggested that in the majority of cases South African adolescents in a disadvantaged context were either not aware of opportunities for career counselling or had no access to such services. Research findings further revealed that limited parental involvement in Black South African disadvantaged adolescents schooling impacted negatively on their academic progress and career development. Lastly, this study identified restricted access to vital resources (such as public libraries) contributed significantly towards Black South African disadvantaged adolescents’ career guidance needs being left unfulfilled.

In another recent study by Kamper, Badenhorst and Steyn (2009) which explored the future expectations of 391 Black South African adolescents from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, nearly 40 % of Black South African adolescent participants expressed a desire to work overseas, returning to South Africa in the future. These results indicate a significant measure of global thinking (and seeking the best career opportunities) amongst Black South
African adolescents.

In their qualitative research with students, Mkhize and Frizelle (2000) found that Black South African students “sometimes find themselves torn between two worlds. On the one hand, they live in the world that values connections and attachments to family and community whilst, on the other hand, they have to spend their educational (and later, work) lives in a world that values independence and competition against others in order to succeed” (p.6). Mkhize and Frizelle proposed that a hermeneutic, storied approach to research provides a more relevant framework for understanding the social and cultural influences on students’ career development in South Africa.

According to Kuit (2006), environmental-societal system influences and their impact on the career development of adolescents at a national level has featured more prominently in South African quantitative research studies. However, with little focus on the impact of environmental-societal system influences on adolescent career development among qualitative studies, context-specific and local meanings ascribed to societal and environmental changes within communities and social groupings are rarely considered. One such framework which is able to capture, understand and reflect the interrelationships between individual, social and environmental-societal system influences and their individual or combined impact on adolescent career development is the framework being adopted in the current study namely, the Systems Theory Framework (STF).

**Summary**

In similar correlation to international research, the majority of South African research investigating the career development of adolescents is generated from quantitative research. Although, a noticeable increase in both qualitative research, as well as research involving Black South African adolescents over the last decade is evident, such studies remain comparatively minimal.
In conclusion, Kuit (2006) proposed that researchers are left with the enormous task of “reinventing and transforming what career research in South Africa is... ...[requiring] a leap from theory into practice and action” (p. 71). The present study aims to answer previous calls to transform career research in South Africa by systemically exploring Black middle-class South African adolescents’ career development. Furthermore, according to Watson (2007, 2010), cultural and contextual sensitivity is imperative in career research, as the career development of an individual cannot be successfully understood if broader systemic contexts such as oppression and inequality are not recognised (Watson, 2007). Contextual sensitivity will be maintained by the researcher using a constructivist, meaning-making and qualitative approach. This approach will be described in the research methodology chapter to follow.
Chapter 4: Research Methodology

In this chapter the research methodology will be discussed. Firstly, the research design will be outlined, including the research aims and a description of the population and sampling method. Secondly, the process of data collection will be explained in detail, followed by an in-depth account of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the method of analysis used to examine and interpret the research data.

Research Design

The research methodology can be considered a qualitative method as it utilised a qualitative career assessment instrument and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is defined as “research which seeks to preserve the integrity of narrative data and attempts to use the data to exemplify unusual or core themes embedded in contexts” (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006, p. 563). An advantage of using a qualitative research method was that this allowed the researcher to offer a detailed, rich and in-depth account of the various identified aspects of the career development of a select group of Black middle-class South African adolescent males.

A qualitative approach provides an opportunity for flexible interaction between the client and counsellor and enables the telling of career stories (Savickas, 1993; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). A further advantage of using a qualitative data collection method was that the reliance on open-ended, holistic, and non-statistical processes (Goldman, 1992) enriched the data captured during the collection process by placing emphasis on the relationship within which clients and counsellors co-construct career development stories. Thus, the qualitative career assessment process used in the present study may be seen as a collaborative rather than as an expert-driven process (Peavy, 1996). However, a disadvantage of such a methodology is that the collected data is neither representative nor generalisable to the population under study (Ingham, Vanwesenbeeck, & Kirkland, 1999).
The present study was also of an exploratory nature as it served as a preliminary investigation into a newly emerging focus of South African career research namely, adolescents who form part of an emergent Black middle class. The semi-structured interview format was chosen for such an exploration as it not only facilitated rapport, but also allowed for a greater flexibility of coverage, while producing thick, rich, descriptive data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The interview used the qualitative career assessment instrument, My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005a), as a template which guided the interviews, while still allowing for further probing into significant areas which presented themselves during the actual interviews.

The first stage of data collection involved the exploration of the career development of each of the three adolescent participants from their perspectives and as well as the perspectives of their parents. Such perspectives were derived from the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI, adolescent version) booklets which uncovered pertinent influences on adolescent career development and provided guidelines for the second stage of data collection namely, semi-structured interviews with participants.

**Research Aims**

Although the influence of family and the significant role of parents have been theoretically acknowledged as critical variables in adolescent career development (Havighurst, 1972) there is still a significant lack of research in South Africa on this topic. Further, there is a current absence of South African career research focusing specifically on middle-class families. Therefore, the primary aim of the present study was to explore the systems of influence on a sample of Black middle-class male South African adolescents’ career development from the perspectives of both adolescents and their parents. Specifically, the achievement of this aim would involve exploring and describing:
a) South African Black middle-class male adolescents’ perceptions of the systemic influences on their career development;
b) South African Black middle-class parents’ perceptions of the systemic influences on their adolescent child’s career development; and
c) The comparison of South African Black middle-class male adolescent and parental perceptions of the systemic influences on the adolescent’s career development.

Population and Sample Description

The present study employed a purposive, non-probability sampling method. Therefore, participants selected to partake in the study were available, willing to participate, and fairly reflected the population being studied (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The advantage of using purposive sampling was that it allowed the researcher to select participants who were able to appropriately address the research topic (Dane, 1990). In this sense, purposive sampling is economical and informative in a way that probability sampling cannot be (Denscombe, 2007).

Such an approach was ideal, since the present study required the participation of nine participants, consisting of three Grade 11 learners, as well as their biological parents, attending a high school in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. Each participant was required to individually complete the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI) booklet for adolescents, as well as to participate in an individual, semi-structured interview. Grade 11 learners were specifically chosen as career research indicates that this is an exploratory year in which career identity is being moulded or refined, as well as a year in which action steps are initiated in order to pursue future career goals (Kuit, 2006; Rogers et al., 2008). Furthermore, Grade 11 learners are typically under less academic pressure than Grade 12 learners, which ensured a greater willingness and availability to participate in the study. Grade 12 learners were also excluded from the sample population as it was felt that the majority of these learners may
already have a fairly strong sense of their future career direction by the time they reach their final year of secondary education.

To ensure an age-appropriate sample for Grade 11, all selected learners were between sixteen and seventeen years of age. Further, the study employed a sample comprised exclusively of males. Such a decision was made as gender differences is a known variable in adolescents’ perceptions of influences on their career development (McMahon & Patton, 1997). Thus, the present researcher decided to exclude the issue of gender differences within the present study. This allowed the criterion of adolescent males to act as a control mechanism since a qualitative method was being implemented and the sample size was small. Thus, a greater validity of the research findings was ensured (Corbetta, 2003).

An all male high school was chosen that typically caters for middle to upper-class families and is geographically located in an upper-class suburb of a major city in South Africa. There is a high percentage of learners attending the school who have parents in professional occupations. All parents participating in the study were asked to provide an occupational description, as well as to disclose their age, educational level, current working status and marital status.

The sample population included only adolescents who had attended the school since Grade 8. Such a decision was necessary, as it ensured that all research participants had been educated within the ethos of the school and that all participants had been taught exclusively through the English medium throughout their high school years. The study was limited to middle class socioeconomic status level as socioeconomic status is known to influence adolescent career development (Diemer & Hsieh, 2008). Given the small sample size, it was decided that limiting the study to one socioeconomic status level would control for such a variable. Therefore, adolescents of a middle-class background were chosen further allowing for comparisons with similar socioeconomic samples in international adolescent career
studies. Additionally, such a criterion was chosen as, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, the South African career literature has not focussed on this population before. In addition, the vast majority of secondary school learners seeking career counselling in South Africa tend to be Caucasian (Maree & Beck, 2004), thus further limiting our understanding of Black middle-class adolescents’ career development. To the present researcher’s knowledge, no South African research currently exists regarding the systemic influences on the career development of Black South African adolescents from the perspectives of both the adolescents and their parents. This study explores the systemic influences on the career development of middle class Black South Africans from the perspectives of both the adolescents’ and their parents’.

Each of the adolescent participants had been members of their current school since Grade 8 and had passed each grade successfully since inception. Further, each learner was currently in Grade 11 and was sixteen years of age. Two of the three families resided in suburbs typically considered as middle class, while one family continued to live in a formal settlement by choice. Three parent participants had teacher qualifications, two of which currently worked for the provincial department of education. Other occupations of parent participants included a nurse, as well as business entrepreneurs working within the financial sector, one of whom was self-employed.

The use of nine participants in total adheres to the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guidelines of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) who state that the default sample size for a Masters-level research study should contain a sample size of three participants. However, since the study is seeking to explore the perceptions of career development from both the perspectives of the adolescents as well as their parents, each family is considered to be one ‘collective participant’ within the study to allow for comparisons to be made across learners.
The instrument employed to investigate the participants’ perceptions of influences on Black middle-class adolescents’ career development was the adolescent version of the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005a, b) qualitative career assessment process. The instrument will now be described.

**Instrument**

The MSCI (Adolescent), which is theoretically founded on the Systems Theory Framework of career development (Patton & McMahon, 1999; 2006b), was developed in response to calls for more extensive use of qualitative career assessment tools which place an emphasis on contextual information. This instrument has so far proven to successfully accommodate a broad spectrum of individuals, as well as being adaptable to diverse cultural groups. This is clearly apparent through its use in several countries, including South Africa and Australia (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005b; Nyoni, 2010).

A variety of attributes of the MSCI (Adolescent) instrument bolster the researcher’s argument that it is tailor-made to accommodate several factors which have previously prevented the use of career development measures within the South African context as a result of cultural biases. For example, South Africa has many diverse population groups of different cultural backgrounds and eleven official languages. However, an advantage of the MSCI (Adolescent) is that it is able to overcome such obstacles through limited use of language and by providing instructions which are simple to understand and, importantly, respectful of all participants (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005a). Thus, the MSCI (Adolescent) allows for the production of a positive assessment environment and promotes a mutually constructed series of systemic influences on, and an understanding of, career development.
Although the English version of the MSCI (Adolescent) was deemed suitable (given the inclusion criteria of English language as the primary language medium of instruction) for the participants, a Xhosa version was available for learners who preferred this option. Interestingly, no participants requested to make use of the Xhosa MSCI (Adolescent) booklet. Furthermore, the MSCI (Adolescent) is sequenced in a series of small, logical and easily achievable steps and demonstrates flexibility in the manner in which it is able to cater for individuality. Finally, the MSCI (Adolescent) personalises the assessment process for the participant and encourages involvement in the assessment process (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005a).

The MSCI (Adolescent) is an eleven-page booklet that assists the participant through a career assessment process by using a number of clearly defined sections. The booklet begins with a biographical section entitled ‘My present career situation’ on page one which requires individuals to identify their current life roles and responsibilities, as well as to reflect on previous career decisions and those factors influential in such career decision choices. The following section, ‘Thinking about who I am’, encourages the client to identify the intrapersonal factors and attributes that they feel define them and make them unique. The booklet then builds on this initial exploration in the sections that follow on pages four, five and six. Page four, entitled ‘Thinking about the people around me’, provides the opportunity for participants to additionally identify individuals from their social system who influence their career decision-making process.

Page five allows for further elaboration as participants are asked to think about and acknowledge external societal and environmental factors that influence their career decisions. On page six, entitled ‘Thinking about my past, present and future’, individuals are encouraged to identify how past, present and future influences each affect the participant’s current career choices. Finally, these influences are combined by the participant into one
integrated illustration of career influences titled My System of Career Influences sketched in a space provided on page eight. This provides a context specific account of the various influences which ultimately play a role in sculpting the individual’s career and which are unique to every individual.

The remainder of the booklet provides a section for reflection on the participant’s system of career influences, as well as a section entitled ‘My action plan’ whereby the participant is able to explore possible career options and plan his or her next steps of career development. These final two sections are imperative in assisting the individual to make an informed career decision as the completed booklet allows individuals to base their future career choices on a holistic understanding of the self-knowledge which has emerged and to make such choices in the light of all systemic influences which play a role in that individual’s life.

Data Collection

After purposively selecting the learners who most accurately fulfilled the research sample criteria, these students were approached by the researcher and provided with a clear description of what the study entailed, what was required of them as participants, as well as the ultimate goals of the study. Furthermore, parental consent for such participants was obtained and, as a part of this process, a request for parental involvement in the study was made.

The collection of data was scheduled at times and places suitable to the participants. Every effort was made to ensure that conducting interviews and the data collection process did not coincide with the learner’s official school times or the parents’ work schedules. Data collection consisted of a two stage process. The first stage required the participation of selected Grade 11 learners who met the sample inclusion criteria, as well as their parents, to individually complete the MSCI (Adolescent) booklet. Although there is an MSCI (Adult)
booklet available, it was vital that the parents of the adolescents completed the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets. In so doing, the parents were required to place themselves into the metaphorical shoes of their sons in order to respond from the perspective of a parent of an adolescent. Therefore, parent participants completed the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets according to the influences they thought their sons would identify with. In total, one and a half hours was needed to explain the contents of the MSCI (Adolescent) to each family and to facilitate the completion of each booklet. The adolescent participants, mother participants and father participants from each family were required to fill out their MSCI (Adolescent) booklets separately and simultaneously with the researcher present to eliminate the possibility of discussion between parents and learners. Furthermore, learners were asked not to communicate their experience of the MSCI with their parents and a letter was also sent to each parent explaining the importance for the findings of maintaining neutrality.

The second stage of data collection entailed individual follow-up sessions in the form of semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured approach was critical in order to explore the various themes and areas of interest which were derived from the completed MSCI booklets. Participants were provided with an opportunity to explain their systemic influences as well as for further contextualisation and exploration of the career concepts. All learners, as well as their parents, who participated completing the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets (the first stage of data collection) volunteered to be individually interviewed in the second stage of data collection.

The duration of each of the interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to an hour. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by an external transcription company and proof-read by the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor in order to ensure accuracy. The transcribing of all interviews also underlines the significance and value ascribed to each participant’s voice in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005).
Since IPA places significant emphasis on the content, description and meaning attached to data, the booklets and the derived interviews related to these booklets were not interpreted or analysed in isolation from one another. Rather, the interpretative process was an idiographic one in which data captured in each of the booklets was constantly referred back to the participants’ meanings embedded in the interview transcripts.

**Procedure**

Each of the interviews took place at the family homes of the research participants outside of official school and work times. The researcher visited each participant’s home twice. During the first visit, the MSCI (adolescent) booklets were completed simultaneously with both participants and adult participants present. Participants were spread throughout the room to avoid collaboration or the influencing of data.

During this first stage of data collection individual follow-up interviews were arranged to take place within a two week period and organised such that all participants would be interviewed on the same day. After returning home and analysing the data emerging from each of the participant’s booklets, semi-structured interview schedules were individualised for each participant. The researcher then returned to conduct the individual semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted in succession to negate the opportunity for collaboration between parental participants and their sons during the interview process.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved a two-step process. Firstly, all completed MSCI booklets were sorted into three groups. The first group consisted of the Grade 11 students’ booklets, while the second and third groups consisted of the fathers’ and mothers’ booklets respectively. The separation of the booklets in such a manner allowed comparisons to be made and for themes to be identified within and across groups. A shortened example of one of the tables used to identify, compare and quantify influences identified in the completed MSCI booklets is
provided below (Table 1; Refer to Appendix A for the full version of Table 1). Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

Table 1

Thinking About Who I Am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Family 1</th>
<th>Family 2</th>
<th>Family 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sisa Nyathi (Learner)</td>
<td>Mrs Nyathi (Mother)</td>
<td>Mr Nyathi (Father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A value I hold</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My beliefs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interests</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My abilities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My health</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My disability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How I cope</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next stage of data analysis took place after the second round of data collection (the semi-structured interviews) was complete. This stage involved the qualitative analysis of the transcribed interview data using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). Since IPA affords the researcher the opportunity to engage with the research question on a qualitative, idiographic level, “the participant’s ‘lived experience’ is coupled with a subjective and reflective process of interpretation, in which the analyst explicitly enters into the research process” (Reid et al., 2005, p. 21). This allowed the underpinning components of adolescents’ career development, as understood through the participants’ perspectives, to emerge from the interview data while still allowing for the interpretation of such components to be guided by the relevant theory. According to Reid et al.:
inferences made from data (i.e., the interview transcripts) to ‘persons’ (embodied and encultured beings) should be done so cautiously, and with an awareness of the contextual and cultural ground against which data are generated (…) [however displaying a willingness] to make interpretations that discuss meaning, cognition, affect and action (p. 21).

Such interpretations may be understood from a multitude of theoretical perspectives, on condition that they stem from the essential account of the participants’ experiences (Reid et al., 2005). Overall, the IPA process was multi-directional and involved malleable thinking, revision, processes of expansion and reduction, originality and vision, all of which acted as ingredients for the co-construction of an insightful and novel outcome (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA suited the purposes of the present research study as it emerged within the field of psychology and was devoted to the investigation of personal experience from an individual, rather than a collective standpoint (Conroy, 2003; Smith, 2004; Willig, 2001). IPA also lent itself well to the analysis of data collected from a small sample size. It was a good tool of analysis to use with small sample sizes as it aimed to illuminate meticulously explored understandings of participants without the need to generalise the results of the study (Conroy, 2003; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Furthermore, while results may not be generalisable, a theoretical generalisability exists in that IPA contains a constituent of Warnock’s (1987) concept of shared humanity. Thus, individuals may identify with experiences of other individuals’ experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

**Theoretical Underpinnings of IPA**

IPA is largely informed by the concepts of idiography, phenomenology and hermeneutics (Smith et al., 2009). To provide a greater understanding of the philosophical and historical underpinnings of IPA, such concepts and theories proposed by Husserl (1931), Heidegger (1967) and Dilthey (1976) will be briefly discussed.
According to Kvale (1996), phenomenology studies the “subjects’ perspectives of their worlds; it attempts to describe in detail the content and structure of the subjects’ consciousness, to grasp the qualitative diversity of their experiences and to explicate their essential meanings” (p. 53). The founder of phenomenology, Husserl (1931), first coined the term *lifeworld* which was understood as being what is experienced prereflectively. Husserl stated that the essence of this lifeworld is not readily available to us as it is continually influenced by the conditioning of our past experiences, as well as that which we take for granted (Husserl, 1931; Tan, Grief, & Couns, 2009). Furthermore, Husserl (1931) suggested that the fundamental principle relating to the study of a phenomenon was “through consciousness and an intentional grasping of the ultimate essences of the unique experience” (Tan et al., 2009, p. 3). However, Husserl proposed that in order to identify such essences, one is required to first “set aside all previous habits of thought, see through and break down the mental barriers which these habits have set along the horizons of our thinking . . . to learn to see what stands before our eyes” (p. 43), a concept which was to become known as *bracketing*, and one which claims to remove distortion of perception (Tan et al., 2009).

According to Heidegger (1967), phenomenology symbolised being able “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (p. 56). Therefore, Heidegger saw phenomenology as a method of accessing reality. However, according to Tan et al. (2009):

to speak of revealing and unveiling has connotations of description, interpretation, and language and hence of hermeneutics. In this sense life is like a text. Our preunderstanding influences our interpretation of this text but, in turn, is changed and enlightened by the interaction. This, of course, makes reference to Heidegger’s version of the hermeneutic circle (p. 4).

Heidegger (1967) coined the term *Dasein*, a term signifying the essential nature of the
human being and postulated, in stark contrast to Husserl (1931), that preunderstanding is a reality of individuals’ being-in-the-world and that it is not capable of being bracketed or removed (Tan et al., 2009). According to Koch (1995), for Heidegger the real question was not “what way ‘being’ can be understood but in what way understanding is ‘being’” (p. 831).

A shift in thought from a phenomenological perspective towards that of hermeneutics was produced by Dilthey (1976; Ricoeur, 1981). Concepts such as “language, literature, behavioral norms, art, and religion, which are the basis of our cultural structure and context” (Tan et al., 2009, p. 3) gave rise to Dilthey’s primary foundation of understanding and led to the recognition that one needs to make interpretations within the context of history and that in acquiring understanding, one moved full-circle from the text to the social and historical context of the researcher and back to the text once more (Tan et al.).

**IPA Guidelines for Data Analysis**

Since IPA is neither prescriptive nor methodolatory in approach but rather interactive and inductive, the guidelines suggested by Smith, et al. (2009) were deemed most suitable when analysing the captured research data. The flexibility offered by the guidelines of Smith et al. (2009) allowed for greater freedom in terms of being able to adapt guidelines in order to suit the research aims and to capture the account-lived experience of the participant in the richest and most descriptive manner possible (Eatough & Smith, 2006, Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, data analysis closely followed the steps outlined by Smith et al..

Smith et al. (2009) recognize six sequential steps in the IPA process. The first step of the analysis process required the researcher to begin by reading the transcribed interview several times (Eatough & Smith, 2006). Such a step was vital as one of the primary aims of IPA is to understand the content and intricacy of meaning (Smith et al.). Therefore, this requirement assisted in ensuring that the researcher became immersed within the transcript such that an interpretive relationship was developed with the text (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
The aim of step two was to obtain a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments collected from the transcript. To achieve this aim, Smith et al. (2009) suggested that the researcher to allocate the left-hand column of the transcript as a space in which to make initial notes, jot down thoughts and opinions, and to highlight areas of significance. Such notes, comments and interpretations later played a vital role in the coding of segments of data and the transformation of such data into themes (Eatough & Smith, 2006). Furthermore, after reading the transcript multiple times, trustworthiness of interpretation was maintained (Smith et al.).

A further stage within this step of data analysis involves revising the content extracted from the transcript after such notes and comments have been made and including linguistic, conceptual and descriptive comments flanking the applicable sections of text (Smith et al., 2009). Linguistic comments focus on the language usage of the participant selected to express their understanding and experiences. Thus, the manner in which language use influences the participant’s construction of meaning was noted by including linguistic aspects such as hesitations, speech repetition, metaphor use pauses and laughter, and assimilating such aspects within the interpretation (Smith et al.). Descriptive comments were used during this stage to note key words, phrases, or explanations which emerge in the transcript (Smith et al.).

The third step of data analysis involved an effort to simultaneously reduce the volume of detail in the transcript and initial notes, while preserving complexity in terms of “mapping the interrelationships, connections and patterns between exploratory notes” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91). Provisional emergent themes echoing the essence of what was voiced by the participant were captured from initial notes, as well as transcript material (Willig, 2001).
The fourth step of analysis entailed identifying associations and commonalities across emergent themes (Smith et al., 2009). Four broad, superordinate themes were established from the interview transcripts, following which an attempt to further cluster the themes in terms of patterns, similarities and differences was made. Furthermore, subordinate themes hierarchically ranked below superordinate themes were established (Eatough & Smith, 2006; See Table 2). This was an iterative process in which the researcher always returned to the original transcript, ensuring that all themes were grounded using extracts from the transcript to ensure validity (Smith et al.). Owing to the fact that IPA contains a double hermeneutic (i.e., the researcher is subjectively trying to make sense of the subjective interpretations of the participant’s understanding of their career development), it was essential to establish inter-rater reliability of the researcher’s coding in order for the research findings to be deemed relevant and valid (Smith, 2003). Consequently, both the researcher’s supervisor and co-supervisor assisted in the process of assessing the superordinate and subordinate themes in order to establish consensus with regard to the dependability of interpreted themes.

The penultimate step identified by Smith et al. (2009) was to progress to the following participant’s transcript and to begin the aforementioned process from the first step once more, treating the new transcript with idiographic commitment and individuality by bracketing all ideas that may have emerged from previous participants’ transcripts (Smith et al.). The sixth and final step of analysis involved searching for and identifying patterns that emerged across participants’ transcripts as recurrent themes (Smith et al.). According to Flowers et al. (2006), such repetitively emerging themes across transcripts reflect shared understandings amongst participants. In addition, the previous guidelines of Smith and Osborne (2003) required the researcher to establish participant validity of interpretations by returning to participants to obtain further clarity regarding any data which was still not clear on completion of interpretation.
This entailed sending various sections of interpreted data back to the participant in order to receive confirmation that the information drawn from the interview was a truthful reflection of what was said by the participant, as well as to receive feedback with regards to the accuracy of the data analysis and the various themes which emerged from the transcribed interview. Furthermore, this opportunity was used to clarify any contradictions which may have arisen during the interview process. However, the latest guidelines of Smith et al. (2009) have omitted this step, as IPA involves becoming an active agent within the IPA procedure. Therefore, much value has been placed by Smith et al. on the fostering of an interpretive relationship between the researcher and the text. Further, the experientially-informed lens of the researcher was not counteracted and one of IPA’s most fundamental emphases on the impact of the double hermeneutic was maintained. According to Smith et al., while this may lead to the truth claims of IPA being tentative and subjective, this subjectivity is “dialogical, systematic and rigorous in its application” (p. 80).

Validity of IPA

In order to increase research validity, Yardley’s (2008) criteria for demonstrating the validity of qualitative research have been met. The core principles identified by Yardley as essential to qualitative research were specifically chosen as it is the same criteria adhered to by Smith et al. (2009).

Yardley’s (2008) criteria contain five core principles, each needing to be addressed within qualitative research. Firstly, a sensitivity to the context of existing theory and research in the development of the research topic is required (Yardley, 2008). The researcher addressed this feature of validity by establishing rapport (and gaining approval to conduct research) with the appropriate gatekeeper prior to contacting potential research participants. Sensitivity was further shown by the conducting of a study which was voluntary in nature and one in which participants were informed that they may withdraw from participation in the
study at any time. Further, rapport was established with all research participants at the beginning of each interview, putting each participant at ease. In addition, sensitivity to culture, religion and family traditions was shown at all times, as well as the use of empathic responding when required of the researcher.

The second criteria involves the illustration of sensitivity with regard to the manner in which the positions and perspectives of research participants may influence how they partake in the study and express themselves freely (Yardley, 2008). This issue was addressed by providing the research participants with the choice of either conducting the data collection process at the school of adolescent participants, or at the houses of participants. All research participants opted for the latter option, maximising privacy, security and convenience. Participants were also considered as experiential experts by the researcher and were respected as such throughout the data collection process.

Thirdly, Yardley (2008) stipulates that a commitment to rigour in the recruitment of participants representing a satisfactory scope of views relevant to the research topic is required of the researcher. This feature of validity was demonstrated by the comprehensive criteria already discussed which were used to select a research sample that most accurately reflected the research population. Yardley’s fourth core principle necessitates transparency in the analysis of data. The researcher addressed this requirement by providing a detailed description of the data analysis process, as well as by attaching a section of an interview transcript which illustrates the analytical process (Appendix B).

Lastly, the researcher is required to demonstrate coherence between the qualitative design and the analysis and presentation of data (Yardley, 2008). The researcher addressed this issue by attempting at all times to place himself in the metaphorical shoes of the reader (Smith et al., 2009), as well as by making the necessary adjustments to the study based on expert career feedback received from both the researcher’s supervisor and co-supervisor. The
commitment to a coherent study was further shown by the researcher in following the latest IPA guidelines of Smith et al..

**Limitations of IPA**

According to Willig (2001), IPA is largely dependent on the soundness and authority in which each research participant is able to communicate through language, since the purpose of IPA is to grasp the fundamental meanings behind an individual’s experience and such meanings are conveyed through language (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, a limitation presented itself in that a participant may be communicating his or her lived experience of the topic of discussion in a medium which is not of his or her mother tongue. As a result, a degree of meaning may have been lost by the researcher or even misrepresented by the participant. However, an advantage also existed as, being culturally informed, each participant’s language will naturally reflect their individual reality and culture (Eatough & Smith, 2008). In order to address the language limitation, participants were offered a choice of languages and chose to communicate in English. Further, all adolescent participants were taught in the medium of English.

**Ethical Considerations**

Permission to conduct the proposed study was acquired from the Department of Education, both the parents and adolescents involved in the study, as well as the principal and necessary staff members of the school. The process for obtaining permission adhered at all times to the code of ethics for research of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Human Ethics Committee.

Contact was made with the principal of the high school in order to obtain permission for conducting the study. Upon receiving such permission, the sample population was considered and all individuals fulfilling the sample criteria were approached by the researcher and provided with a letter describing the intentions of the study, as well as a request to
voluntarily participate in the study. The initial approaching of possible participants by the researcher was vital as it ensured that there was no possibility of duress by an authority figure.

Participants were explained all of their rights as research participants within the study. Informed consent was established and participants were assured that their participation within the study would remain confidential (see Appendix A). Furthermore, participants were also made fully aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wished. Lastly, permission was also obtained for the use of an audio recording device during each of the interviews, so that interviews could be transcribed verbatim.

The ethical principle of non-maleficence was strictly adhered to throughout the course of the study, such that no harm to any participants was ensured. Participation was also of a voluntary nature and confidentiality of all data was (and will continue to be) upheld, with results only used for research purposes. Feedback was provided to the participants, the participants’ parents and the school in the form of a written report.

This chapter has explored the research design, aims of the study, explained the rationale and selection of research participants, as well as the methods of data collection and data analysis. In the following chapter the research findings will be presented and discussed under the relevant superordinate and subordinate themes.
Chapter 5: Findings

The following chapter presents the research findings obtained from both the MSCI (adolescent) booklets and the individual semi-structured interviews. Firstly, the MSCI (adolescent) findings are structured in accordance with both the MSCI (adolescent) booklet format, as well as the STF’s three systems of influence, namely the individual system, social system and environmental-societal system. This section explores the collective responses for each of the systems of influence selected or nominated by participants in the MSCI (adolescent) booklets. The MSCI (adolescent) booklets provide the reader with a broader understanding of the responses which shaped participants’ semi-structured interviews.

Secondly, the IPA findings obtained from the individual semi-structured interviews will be comprehensively explored, accounting for the majority of this chapter. In this section, the contents of each of the superordinate themes (displayed in Table 2) will be briefly explained, followed by the exploration of each of the superordinate and subordinate themes in greater detail, and the comparison of research findings with previous research.

MSCI (Adolescent) Findings

For the interest of the reader, the researcher refers the reader to Appendix C for the inclusion of the summative diagrams from the Dlamini family’s MSCI (Adolescent) booklets. These diagrams demonstrate how the adolescent and the parents summarised the influences of the three systems into a holistic pattern. The MSCI (Adolescent) findings for all participants in the present study are explained in each of the three systems below.

Individual System

The individual system (see Figure 1) is comprised of a range of intrapersonal influences such as age, gender, abilities, personalities, interests and sexual orientation. According to the STF, the individual is a system in its own right and has various subsystems (McMahon, 2005), each of which will now be explored from the participants’ perspectives.
Figure 5 depicts a visual representation of the frequency of the participants’ responses to individual influences from the MSCI (adolescent) booklets. Firstly, eight of the nine participants responded that learners’ personalities had an influence on their career development. This finding supports previous research which suggested that personality played a significant role in learners’ career development (Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2010, Kuit, 2006; Rogers, Creed, & Glendon, 2008). Secondly, in line with the findings of Kuit (2006), learners’ values and abilities were also reported by eight of the nine participants to influence learners’ career development. Additionally, learners’ beliefs and interests were indicated by participants as having a further impact on the career development of Black adolescent learners. Interestingly, in contrast with previous research findings of Young et al., (2001), who found adolescent career development to be influenced by culture, only two parent participants acknowledged culture as impacting on Black adolescents’ career development. Therefore, no adolescent participants identified culture as a factor influencing their career development.

![Figure 5: Thinking About Who I Am](image)
Social System

The social system (see Figure 2) refers to the other people systems with which individuals interact (for example, peers, family, and educational institutions; McMahon & Watson, 2008). Firstly, all participants believed that the parents of the Black adolescent participants influenced the learners’ career development. This finding supports previous research (e.g., Buthelezi et al., 2009; Diemer, 2007; Domene et al., 2007; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Halpern, 2005; Lindstrom et al., 2007; Maite, 2008; Palos & Drobot, 2010; Salami & Aremu, 2007; Schultheiss, 2006; Sher, 2000; Turner et al., 2006; Wong & Liu, 2010). Further, eight of the nine participants acknowledged learner’s teachers as having an impact on Black adolescents’ career development. This finding supports the research of Dullabh (2004), Helwig (2008) and Otto (2000). Such results, as well as less frequently identified social influences, are summarized in Figure 6:
Environmental-Societal System

The social system and the individual system are located within the broader environmental-societal system (see Figure 3; McMahon & Watson, 2008). Although the subsystems of the environmental-societal system (e.g., globalisation and political decisions) may seem less directly related to individuals, they nonetheless have an influence on individual career development (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Figure 7 depicts a visual representation of the frequency of participants’ responses to societal-environmental influences from the MSCI (adolescent) booklets.

![Figure 7: Thinking About Society and My Environment](image)

Firstly, financial support was acknowledged by all nine participants as having an impact on Black adolescent learners’ career development. Secondly, in support of findings by Kuit (2006), eight of the nine participants also identified the opportunity to work overseas as having a considerable influence on the learner participants’ career development. Other factors considered as having an impact on Black adolescent learners’ career development were: location of universities, the cost of career options, job availability and the learners’ local area. Further, participants acknowledged the influence of geographical location on
career development. This finding concurs with Christmas-Best and Schmitt-Rodermund (2001), Hancock (2009) and Kuit (2006) who suggested that an adolescent’s horizons for career development are restricted by geographic location and that adolescent males tend to consider acceptable careers available within a nearby geographical vicinity.

IPA Findings

Following the administration and analysis of the MSCI (adolescent) booklets, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to gather an in-depth understanding about the meaning attributed by the participants to their MSCI diagrams. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the interview data. The underpinning components of adolescents’ career development, as understood through the research participants’ perspectives, emerged from the interview data, forming four superordinate themes (see Table 2), specifically: Family Dynamics, The Ghost Of Apartheid, Great Expectations and Coconuts Fall Far From The Tree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate Themes</th>
<th>Subordinate Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Dynamics:</td>
<td>The Supportive Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Authoritative Father</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collaborative Parenting</td>
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<td>Conditional Support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers as Second Parents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do this but Don’t Blame Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ghost of Apartheid:</td>
<td>Avoiding Hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work Hard and Be Resilient</td>
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<td>Vicarious Empowerment</td>
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<td>Ambivalence Regarding BEE</td>
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<td>Great Expectations:</td>
<td>Indebtedness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Don’t Disappoint Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do your Homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconuts Fall Far from the Tree:</td>
<td>Fear and Acculturation</td>
</tr>
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Each of the superordinate and subordinate themes will now be meticulously explored, illuminating the perspectives of the research participants below. The names of all participants, the school and teachers mentioned in this chapter have been substituted with pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality.

**Family Dynamics**

The superordinate theme of family dynamics relates to mother and father participants’ roles in the shaping and influencing of Black South African adolescent learners’ career development. A number of participants also referred to teachers as being a second parent to adolescent participants, necessitating the inclusion of teachers within this superordinate theme. Family dynamics contains six subordinate themes (see Table 2), the culmination of which captures the family dynamics of the Black South African participants. Family dynamics and the roles of different family members were saturated throughout the participants’ interviews, each of which will be explored beneath the applicable subordinate themes to follow.

**The supportive mother**

The role of the mother as a source of emotional support, as well as disparate parental power relationships will be explored in this subordinate theme. Firstly, one of the trends emerging from the interview data was the perception of mothers as being the foundation of emotional support for their sons. According to Mr Nyathi, the mother fulfilled an important role in ensuring that his son had emotional support, as well as consistently praying for their son. Further, Mr Nyathi felt that it was the duty of a mother to ease her son’s discomfort and address any emotional concerns. Consistent with the beliefs of Mr Nyathi, Mrs Nyathi offered the following opinion regarding a mother’s role to the career development of her child:
My role to Sisa, to influence Sisa, is to ensure that he is at school, he is at school on time, he is presentable, there is nothing disturbing him at school. If there are any problems he must feel free to come and discuss it with me, the type of friends that he makes as well, I need to understand and get to know the families that he visits.

Further, the mother’s role of satisfying her son’s emotional needs by providing encouragement and emotional support is illustrated by Mrs Nyathi’s son, Sisa, who claimed, “I think like the mother understands you more [than the father].” The perception of the mother as the primary source of nurturance was not limited to the Nyathi family, but was also expressed by participants in each of the remaining two families. According to Mrs Dlamini, her empathic nature and the degree to which she cares for her son’s emotional needs were even accused, on occasion, by Mr Dlamini for being too excessive, as illustrated by his comment in the following excerpt, “He (Mr Dlamini) used to even blame me saying I am too soft.” Mr Mafu also commented on the mother’s role in the career development of their son. According to him, while the father is expected to ensure that his son’s financial needs are met, the mother is expected to fulfil all other roles. The view held by Mr Mafu is illustrated with the following comment made during his interview, “All the other parts, psychological and emotional, mother, females take that role.”

While the mother was portrayed by numerous participants as the provider of nurturance, emotional support, psychological support and physical support, a further trend emerged from the interview data. According to Mrs Dlamini, the power required by Black South African middle class mothers to dictate opinions regarding the career development of their sons was neither established nor acknowledged by their husbands. Resultantly, Mrs Dlamini describes caring for the emotional needs of her son as a secondary, submissive role. According to Mrs Dlamini, “We associate them with fathers, so we like to shift whatever
(career development) to the father to take care of. You know, so we are not fully ... We don’t have that power.” Interestingly, Mr Dlamini verbalised during his interview, “We [fathers] should be supporting them [their children] emotionally and the other side as well.” However, despite the acknowledgement by Mr Dlamini that it is necessary for both parents to provide emotional support, this still did not occur within the Dlamini household.

Mothers were also depicted by participants as having less power and being less authoritative than their husbands. In spite of this, complete responsibility for the upbringing and career development of his sons was still felt by Mr Mafu to be assumed by his wife. According to Mr Mafu, “The role of the mother is to ensure that she nurtures these children and she ensures that the good that can come out from these children. Because I always say to her, if children are a failure I blame the mom, I really blame the mother.”

In conclusion, the role of mothers with regards to the career development of their sons was identified by numerous participants as being nurturers to their sons, providing emotional, psychological, and physical support. Furthermore, an uneven power dynamic was also described by mother participants, expressing feelings of powerlessness in relation to their husbands and the insignificant degree of influence they felt they had on their son’s career guidance and upbringing. Such a dynamic verbalised by mother participants contrasts with previous research literature which identifies adolescents’ mothers as the parental figure most influencing their career development (Dawkins, 1989; June & Fooks, 1980; Thomas, 1986).

**The authoritarian father**

The following subordinate theme will seek to explore and unpack the manner in which participants discussed a father’s role in the career development of Black middle class South African adolescents.
Possibly the strongest responses echoing throughout participants’ interviews were perceptions of the father needing to fulfil an authoritarian role in the upbringing of his son. According to Mrs Dlamini, it was the role of her husband to ensure that her son remains disciplined. Zuko Dlamini held a similar belief. When asked what he felt a father’s role was in relation to the career development of his son, Zuko responded, “Well to teach him behaviour and discipline”. Further, Zuko felt that the father had the additional responsibility of providing guidance to his son as he grew up, fulfilling the role as a mentor to Zuko. Mrs Nyathi added to the view expressed by Mrs Dlamini, stating:

I think the father (especially among Black families) is always the head of the household. Whatever he says goes and if a child doesn’t want to listen to discipline, the minute you mention that, “I will tell your father”, he sort of soon understands how serious the situation is.

The above extract clearly shows the traditional Xhosa belief in a patriarchal family in which the father is seen as the leader of the household (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998). Further, in congruence with Zuko Dlamini, Mrs Nyathi stated:

I think they [fathers] are more the disciplinarians at home (...) and he is a role model to Sisa. So he must watch his step or whatever he does because Sisa one day he will imitate him. He will do the things that the father enjoys doing or the things (the bad things) that he does as well. He is a role model to his son and he gives him guidance as well to manhood.

Similarly, Mrs Nyathi’s son, Sisa, felt that the role of a father was to provide his son with unconditional support, regardless of his son’s career decisions. Further, Sisa voiced the additional role expectation for his father to express his opinions and offer advice regarding his son’s career decisions. Sisa’s father acknowledged this role, as did Mr Mafu, who felt that his role as a father was to be a role model to his son, as well as offering career guidance,
while still allowing his son to make his own ultimate career decision. Acknowledgement of parental guidance as a factor influencing adolescent career development supports previous research (e.g., Diemer, 2007; Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson & Zane (2007), Palos & Drobot (2010); Turner et al., (2006). However, according to Mr Mafu, a component of career guidance involves being able to voice his disagreement with his son by saying, “No! No! Hold on my son. This thing, it goes this way and this way and this way.” Similarly, Mr Nyathi felt that it was his responsibility to encourage participation by Sisa in career areas drawing on Sisa’s strengths and in which his son was excelling, while discouraging career decisions which involve the incorporation of Sisa’s weaknesses. Mr Nyathi also disclosed his belief that it was a father’s responsibility to sow the seeds for the future career choices of his son from an early age, saying, “You hope you have moulded him (Mmm) to what he can now choose (...) You know, the seed was planted already there in, in the early stages.” Finally, Mr Mafu identified a further role expected of himself as a father. He felt that he was responsible for the upholding and passing down of the family’s Xhosa culture and traditions. According to Mr Mafu,

My role is to ensure that he [Patrick Mafu] does not deviate from the principles of the family, what we believe in here. Much as you know teenagers, somewhere, somehow, they will have to teenage, but I am fortunate enough to have a son that still listens. The other Black families are in trouble, because fathers do not take their role, they let the mothers take their roles, and then suddenly the children believe in all forms of artificial and materialistic attitude.

Interestingly, the above excerpt illustrates Mr Mafu’s strong belief in the perceived successful nature of traditional roles within the Xhosa family system, as well as the importance of instilling and upholding values and principles (Smith, 2006). Failure to
conform to such roles, or the alteration thereof, was believed to inevitably result in negative outcomes. Further, such a response by Mr Mafu supports the findings of Kuit (2006) who reported values to significantly influence South African adolescents’ career development.

In contrast with the views of other father participants, as well as traditional Xhosa family roles (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998), Mr Mafu admitted that his wife is the primary disciplinarian of his children, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

I can say that my wife is playing a primary role. I don’t take the kids to school, she takes the kids to school, that is where she disciplines them in the car, because women can really discipline, I always say to my wife, it is not the father that disciplines most it is the mother, but if the mother does not discipline, then all things will go loose (...) She is the first one to speak and say, “No!” Even he [Patrick] asks permission for wherever he wants to go, from the mother, not from me.

In conclusion, the majority of participants felt that it was a father’s role to provide career guidance, as well as to teach his son about his family heritage and cultural traditions. However, despite the majority of participants offering similar beliefs that the father is expected to fulfil an authoritative role, a shift in this traditional Xhosa cultural expectation was made apparent by one of the Black middle class families.

**Collaborative parenting**

Another trend which emerged from interview transcripts was the desire voiced by a number of parent research participants to adopt a more collaborative parenting style. This desire for familial transformation suggests a movement away from traditional Xhosa patriarchal parenting styles towards the adoption of more westernised, collaborative parenting style (Siqwana-Ndulo, 1998). One such participant was Mrs Dlamini. After having already identified the differing roles of each parent in relation to the career development of her son, a
desire for a change in parenting styles and a mutual sharing of parental roles was voiced in the following excerpt:

I don’t think it should differ (...) I don’t think it should be that much different. It’s very much important that everybody should play (...) their respective roles (...) Both parties should be working together.

Although Mrs Dlamini expressed a disparity between clearly defined maternal and paternal parental roles, Zuko Dlamini offered a contrasting belief. Zuko was unable to differentiate between the roles of his mother and father in relation to his career development as he felt that each parent contributed equally in a variety of career developmental areas. According to Zuko, “It is the same because they are both parents and they know how to raise up a child (...) It is all the same. My mother helps me. My father helps me. They both teach me discipline.”

Further indicative of collaborative parenting within the Dlamini household was expressed by Mr Dlamini who described the importance of open communication between both parents and their son in the following excerpt:

In most instances as I have done with him, we would just chat out and try and be very open and honest and take into consideration that, that what presently is perfect might not be perfect tomorrow. Okay, so I, I, sit down and talk to him quite a lot and listen to him as well, what his aspirations are.

Mrs Dlamini conveyed a similar desire for honest, bidirectional communication as Mr Dlamini, stating, “If we want to shape their future we need to stand together and talk one language you understand (...) We like to sit together, my husband and the kids and then we will discuss. In stark contrast to the Dlamini family, Mr Nyathi discussed the lack of communication between himself and Mrs Nyathi regarding the career development of their son. According to Mr Nyathi, “Myself and my wife we don’t talk much about these things
and I, we, we, we’re not sort of generating our energy into one fixed goal. I, I do my own thing and I do what I deem fit to be done for, for Sisa.” Mr Nyathi further explained that in spite of broken communication between himself and Mrs Nyathi, there was a method being implemented by both parents relating to Sisa’s career development. In the following excerpt, Mr Nyathi describes the manner in which responsibilities are shared between parents according to strengths and abilities:

We all play different roles and those roles they depend entirely on abilities. I’m not a good writer and my wife is more on that side and when Sisa needs like an assignment and all those things (...) my wife used to sort of arrange them (...) and I would come in, you know, to generate ideas and give him the information and try and arrange it but when it comes to putting it on paper I was not there. I left that. The reason is (Mrs Nyathi) is more of a technical person and, eh, an academic person.

Interestingly, in contrast with the other two families who were currently residing in suburbs typically regarded as middle class, Mrs Dlamini demonstrated her firm belief in ubuntu by describing the community members within the formal settlement in which her family had decided to live as additional family members. According to Mrs Dlamini:

They [the community members] are very special people. We are all grownups. The way we discipline our kids - If the neighbour’s child is doing something wrong, I am not afraid to say, “Hey! Please don’t do this. Don’t do this. It won’t take you anywhere and they will respect that and listen. They won’t say, “No! No, you are not my parent. You are not my father. I won’t listen to what you are saying.” The people that are living here are as if we are from one parent.
In conclusion, numerous parent participants voiced the desire to adopt a more collaborative parenting style by assuming a mutual sharing of parental roles, increasing the degree of open, honest communication between parents and the amount of bidirectional communication between parents and their sons. Further, supporting the research findings of Bullington and Arbona (2001), Buthelezi, Alexander and Seabi (2009), Kuit (2006) and Sher (2000), each of the Black adolescent participants acknowledged that their parents influenced their career development. Finally, only participants still residing in a formal settlement expressed the belief that all adult community members within their local area acted as parental figures, and were respected as such by each others’ children. This finding suggests that cultural traditions may be more difficult for Xhosa families to maintain when residing away from community members and outside of formal settlements.

**Conditional support**

Emerging from the participants’ interviews was the manner in which parent participants spoke of the ‘unrestricted support’ they harboured towards their children. However, such interviews further suggested that this unconditional support was only awarded by parent participants when the career path selected by adolescent participants ensured financial security and gained the approval of their parents. Further, this subordinate theme also highlights and discusses a contradiction amongst parents, fraught throughout their interviews, relating to the value parent participants attributed to the independent career choice of their sons, while strongly dissuading career choices which they do not deem acceptable.

One parent participant who clearly illustrated conditional support (masked as unconditional support) towards the career decisions and career development of his son was Mr Nyathi. Firstly, Mr Nyathi spoke of the importance and value associated with allowing his son to make an independent career choice, saying: “We encourage, our kids all of our kids to choose their own careers.” This supports the research findings of Bardick, Bernes,
Magnusson and Witco (2005), who found that parents believed they have an informative, supportive, and educative role in assisting with career planning. However, this encouragement was limited to a number of career avenues which Mr Nyathi had earmarked as acceptable career choices. Although Mr Nyathi never overtly discouraged his son from making certain career choices which were not to his liking, the following excerpt demonstrates how he covertly expresses his disapproval by withdrawing support for those career decisions made by Sisa which he does not endorse:

You support him where you think he’s doing the right thing and don’t give support where you, you think he’s not. That’s not the line to take for him – and then you just make it difficult for him without...without, um, punishing him. But you just withdraw your support.

Furthermore, in stark contrast with his previous statement that he encouraged his son to make an independent career choice, the following excerpt demonstrates how Mr Nyathi strongly persuaded Sisa to pursue the future career path of chartered accountancy: “The reason why I, I pushed him into accountancy the world is made of earning money.”

A further condition on which Mr Nyathi’s support relied was the concrete evidence that his son was performing well in certain career areas or subjects. According to Mr Nyathi, “It doesn’t make sense if you, you would push your son, unless he is really excelling in what he is doing and then nobody can really sort of push him aside.” Later on during his interview, Mr Nyathi revealed that both he and his wife did, in fact, resort to overtly discouraging certain career decisions being contemplated by his son. The Nyathi parents’ methods of career condonement are demonstrated in the following extract:

We ask the reasons why they are choosing that and where we felt that the career it is (...) From our experience (working experience), we say, “Okay, the market is flooded (...) You are not going to go anywhere with that career” and
try and put sense into them (...) If it is a career that we see it is great, it is good, and he has got a passion for it, we encourage them.

Finally, Mr Nyathi expressed that he overemphasised his son’s perceived failures to ensure that Sisa excelled academically. Rather than showing unconditional support towards his son during periods in which Sisa was finding it difficult to learn, understand and cope with his schoolwork, Mr Nyathi said:

I’m the one who always says when he, he’s done bad and I, I rub it in. I rub it in so that he can be angry so that he can get up and, and, and go. And he hates me for that. He doesn’t understand why am I doing it. All failures I put [under] a magnifying glass and make them bigger in his face. Not because I want to make him afraid, I just want him to, to, understand that this is a failure (...) I would indicate to him this and that you could have done better.

Similarly to Mr Nyathi, the following quote illustrates the value attributed by Mr Mafu towards allowing Patrick to make an independent career choice. “I am honest with you, we have not interfered with the child. What kind of career the child wants, we have not interfered at all.” However, Mr Mafu further disclosed that, although he was willing to allow Patrick to fashion his own career development by make his own career decisions, the support of Patrick’s decisions was conditional and would first need to meet his approval. According to Mr Mafu, “He [Patrick] is the one that makes the choice (...) but you cannot choose a career that will become a problem for you later on in life.” During Patrick’s interview, it was apparent that Patrick had developed a strong aspiration to pursue the career of becoming a physiotherapist in the future. However, Patrick expressed a reluctance to communicate this to his father due to his father’s overt disapproval of physiotherapy as a career choice. Speaking of his son’s desire to become a physiotherapist and whether he would support such a decision, Mr Mafu responded, “For me, physiotherapy is not a career (...) I am against it as
a parent.” Additionally, Mr Mafu revealed that he had communicated the degree of pride which he would experience towards his son on the condition that the following career path was pursued by Patrick:

I have exposed him to many friends that are financially independent and I said to him, “‘Later on, my boy, you must be able to say to yourself, “I have got a company, I can employ people” (...) If there is an opportunity for you to be independent, and make your own decision, have your own family, and so on, that I will be very proud of you.’”

Finally, Mr Mafu summed up his belief regarding not only his role as a father towards Patrick’s career decisions, but also the degree of support he would share towards his son’s career choice by saying, “My role is not to change him, but if he takes that career, he mustn’t come back to me.” Therefore, Mr Mafu expressed that, although he would allow Patrick to make an independent career choice, his support would be conditional, depending on whether or not Patrick’s career aspirations were similar to his own career aspirations for Patrick.

Similarly to the perspectives regarding the support of their sons’ career decisions held by the Nyathi and Mafu father participants, Mr Dlamini began by highlighting his respect towards Zuko’s autonomy. Mr Dlamini stated:

He [Zuko] must also decide from what he wants, okay and take into consideration his abilities and potential and what it takes, you know, in order to make that a successful choice in choosing a career (...) I think, at the end of the day, we cannot be all accountants (...) He is the one that decides that okay this is it, and we will try and support him.

Although the above excerpt shows a greater willingness to attempt to support Zuko’s future career decisions than the previous two families, it is still apparent that parental support by Mr Dlamini will only be offered as long as Zuko carefully weighs up the benefits and
feasibility of possible career paths, while accurately factoring in his personal abilities in relation to such career options. The conditional support of the Dlamini parents was further disclosed by Zuko Dlamini when he was asked whether or not he felt that his parents would prohibit certain career choices. Zuko responded, “They would advise me not to because they will tell me, okay, check this is the negative thing about this career.”

In conclusion, parent participants from each of the three families expressed conditional support toward their future career choices while attempting to portray their support as being unconditional. Father participants further attributed a great value to the autonomous career decision abilities of their sons. However, in contradiction, father participants illustrated that this autonomy and independence was conditional and would be challenged if the approval of their sons’ career choices was not awarded.

*Teachers as second parents*

The following subordinate theme explores the impact of teachers on the personal and career development of adolescent participants, as well as the emphasis placed by parent participants on teachers’ roles and their abilities to shape and guide their sons’ future career paths. In the first excerpt, Mrs Dlamini describes the great value attributed by herself and her husband towards the teachers at Zuko’s school:

You know I believe the teachers are also the parents, we are parent number one and they are parent number two because (...) teachers will never teach our kids something that is not right. They will always discipline our kids. That we love. That we respect (...) They are more than parents (...) The part they are taking to our kids is more than what we are doing to our kids because most of the time we are at work. We leave as early as seven. We will come at seven at night to find that the kid is so disciplined, so really and truly I take my hat off to them.
Rather than simply acknowledging teachers’ roles of educating her son, Mrs Dlamini shows a further appreciation for the manner in which Zuko’s teachers have instilled in him a sense of discipline. As a result of Mrs Dlamini’s long working hours, she relies on Zuko’s teachers to educate, discipline and assist considerably with the raising of her child in terms of both Zuko’s academic development and his personal development.

Interestingly, although another parent, Mrs Nyathi, admits that this has not been the case in her family, she generalised about Black South African parents during her interview, “There is still a big problem with Black parents not really having interest that much with their children (…) We just send our kids at [to] school and expect the teacher to do the rest. It still happens with us, the middle class.” Mrs Nyathi’s view of Black South African parents appears to be an accurate generalisation for the Dlamini family. Although Mr and Mrs Dlamini do have a vested interest in their son’s development, their demanding careers do not leave much additional time to ensure that Zuko’s academic or personal developmental needs are sufficiently met.

Mr Dlamini also voiced appreciation towards Zuko’s teachers, acknowledging their impact on the career development of his son. In addition to the various ways in which his wife believed teachers influenced Zuko, Mr Dlamini identified teachers as performing a valuable role as neutral shapers of Zuko’s future career. Mr Dlamini’s admiration of, and gratitude towards teachers, is illustrated in the following extract:

I think most of the time the teachers are around them and they see what one is capable of and most specially the subjects that they are doing (…) They can give some inputs and they are honest (…) I believe that they are far much more open or they are neutral, put it that way, than I am (…) That is why I say they should be playing quite a big role in shaping one’s career.
Similarly to the opinion expressed by Mrs Dlamini, Patrick Mafu spoke of one of his teachers, Mr Smith (a pseudonym), as a positive figure of support and guidance, similar to that of a parent. While speaking about Mr Smith, Patrick said, “He’s played a big role in my life this year (…) I just see the way that he brings up his sons and (…) his advice he’s given me this year on what I could do with my life and… how strong a boy I am.” Sharing a similar perspective to Patrick was Sisa Nyathi. Sisa acknowledged that he too had fostered a positive relationship with his school guidance counsellor.

According to Sisa, “I am really close to Mr Willard (a pseudonym) and I just go into his office and I just speak to him about anything that is like on my mind or anything like that. So I think I am really close to him and like he advises me.” Although Sisa identified one specific teacher as fulfilling the role of his mentor, supporter and career guidance counsellor, he also acknowledged the support of the rest of his teachers and the manner in which they were able to motivate and instil confidence in himself by claiming, “They have seen my marks and they have seen what I am capable of doing (…) They know what I can achieve (…) So they can push me in the areas like I think I can’t go, but they know that I can go.”

**Do this but don’t blame me**

Similarly to the subordinate theme of *Conditional Support*, the following subordinate theme further explores parent participants’ perceptions of their son’s autonomy as an essential component of the career decision-making process. However, this subordinate theme has a specific focus on the manner in which perceived autonomy may be used as a means of avoiding responsibility for their son’s future career development issues by the parent participants.

During the interview with Mr Mafu, he mentioned on more than one occasion that he has not participated in or “interfered at all” with his son’s career decisions. Mr Mafu explained that if he assumed the role of a detached observer of his son’s career development
process, he would not feel accountable or be blamed for any career decisions which may retrospectively be regarded as incorrect in the future. This fear of responsibility is illustrated by the following quote by Mr Mafu: “I said to my boy, “What do you want to be later on in life. Make your choice, so that you don’t blame me.”

A similar perspective to that of her husband was offered by Mrs Mafu, who stated, “I didn’t involve myself so much (...) so that I am not to be blamed later on.” She explained that as a result of having personally experienced having her career path chosen for her when she was younger, she did not wish for Patrick to be subjected to the same negative experience. Although both parents clearly wished to detach themselves from the responsibility or blame associated with potentially poor career choices for their son, the following excerpt shows how Mr Mafu still influences his son’s career decisions:

I said to him [Patrick] (...) “When you make choices of subjects, make it a point that you have got something to fall [back] on, so your choice of subjects must be two-dimensional and not too much focus on one string.

Similarly, Patrick Mafu stated that both of his parents advised him to pursue a wide career base of at least five or six careers, even though he had already narrowed his future career choice down to only two or three particular careers. Lastly, in stark contradiction to Mr Mafu’s insistence that he had neither influenced, nor interfered with his son’s career choices, Patrick revealed how he felt that his father had constantly attempted to select his own career path for him. This is illustrated in the following extract from Patrick’s interview:

It has happened. It really has happened, I can’t lie! (...) It started I think it was last or the year before, my dad started mapping out my decisions for me and it was kind of weird because it was really not the stuff that I wanted to go into (...) Any professional career with money (...) Most of the time he has tried to map out a career for me.
Mr Mafu further avoided any responsibility for his part in his son’s career development by stating, “The role of the mother is to ensure that she nurtures these children and she ensures that the good that can come out from these children (...) I always say to her, if children are a failure I blame the mom. I really blame the mother. She knows it.”

In contrast with fear of blame and responsibility verbalised by the parents of Patrick Mafu, Mr Nyathi offered a different message to his son. Mr Nyathi admitted that he had attempted to choose the future career path of accountancy for his son, saying that he tried to “push the child, actually try and decide for the child to take the [career] line” he felt fitting from as early as when Patrick was only nine years of age. However, unlike Mr Mafu, Mr Nyathi did not share the same fear of responsibility for his decision to push Patrick to become a chartered accountant. Rather, Mr Nyathi disclosed that in spite of choosing Sisa’s career path for him, any career failures which may potentially be experienced by Sisa in the future would be entirely Sisa’s fault.

The shifting of responsibility towards Sisa is demonstrated by two excerpts from Mr Nyathi’s interview. Firstly, Mr Nyathi stated: “It’s totally entirely up to him (...) The only thing that I expect from him is consistency in what he is doing and show interest (...) in what we have moulded him to become.” Secondly, the following extract shows how Mr Nyathi views his son’s continuous lack of academic effort to have such a debilitating effect on his career development that he refers to it as a handicap: “He’s lazy (...) and that’s his disability and he doesn’t understand that that disability’s going to be a hindrance in future for him.”

In conclusion, while the Mafu parents denied any influence or interference regarding their son’s career decisions, fearing that blame would be attached to them, Mr Nyathi did not. However, Mr Nyathi also did not acknowledge responsibility for his career decision made on his son’s behalf, owing to the fact that he considered any potential career decisions perceived as failures by Sisa to be a direct result of Sisa’s perceived laziness, of which Mr Nyathi was
not to blame. Therefore, although differing perspectives were offered between Mr Mafu, Mrs Mafu and Mr Nyathi, each parent participant either indirectly or directly conveyed the message of ‘do this but don’t blame me’ to their son.

**The Ghost of Apartheid**

In spite of the abolishment of the apartheid regime almost sixteen years ago, parent participants highlighted the apparent need to continue focusing on the effects thereof, as indicated by interview data that demonstrated perceived causal relationships linking the effects of apartheid with the manner in which parent participants raised and influenced their sons. This superordinate theme contains four subordinate themes, each of which represent ways in which adolescents continue to experience the impact of apartheid sixteen years after its abolishment.

**Avoiding hardship**

This subordinate theme discusses the aspirations voiced by parent participants to ensure that their sons never have to endure the struggles that they experienced during the apartheid regime.

During their interviews, parent participants offered similar responses regarding the effects of adversity they had to endure during and after apartheid on their sons’ career development. Firstly, Mr Mafu stated, “As Black middle class people we want the best out of our children, especially our sons...and we know where we struggled to get to where we are. I don’t want my kids to struggle in the manner that I struggled.” Mr Mafu further explained how the legacy of apartheid had hampered his own career development and had limited his career aspirations by him only being presented with four career options:

You know, in our education system what we are taught is you either became a teacher, you either became a nurse (...) not careers that we see today. And you will find most in our communities, we are either teachers or either nurses
or prison warders or police, that is all.

Similarly, Mrs Dlamini explained that when she was younger she was forced to pursue one of only three possible career options namely, teaching, nursing or becoming a policewoman. Consequently, Mrs Dlamini noted that she is not able to change career paths due to herself only having a few years until she retires and that she hoped that her children would never experience the same hardships that she had endured as a result of limited career availability. Reflecting the findings of Ojeda and Flores (2008) who suggested a significant relationship between Black adolescent learners’ educational aspirations and their parents’ educational levels, Mrs Dlamini voiced a similar explanation to Mrs Nyathi regarding the desire to ensure that her son did not have to endure the same form of suffering that she did by providing him with high-quality education. Interestingly, while the findings of Ojeda and Flores were congruent with the career aspirations of learner participants, opinions offered by mother participants suggest that parents with lower education levels may make additional sacrifices and become highly motivated for their sons to achieve higher education levels than themselves in order to prevent similar levels of suffering endured by themselves in the past.

Further, Mrs Dlamini added:

“We are used to suffer. We have been suffering from birth, so we know how to adjust...how to adapt...how to do whatever from this little money (...) We don’t have money, but we want to give our kids the best because we don’t want them to go through what we have gone through. Even if we are normal, they must be able to live better lives, because without education there is no life.

Congruent with Mrs Dlamini’s financially prosperous career aspirations for her son, Mr Dlamini expressed a similar sentiment: “I wouldn’t like them [his children] to experience the same problems or mistakes that we have gone through.” Mr Dlamini further revealed that
he perceived it to be his duty to ensure that Zuko lived a more financially secure and affluent lifestyle to that of himself in the future. This desire expressed by Mr Dlamini was shared not only by the Dlamini parents, but also by their son. In the following excerpt, Zuko Dlamini explains how this desire resonated amongst his entire family, with each sibling strongly motivated to surpass the standards of living and lifestyles of older family members:

As a family we told ourselves that you know we must just focus on a career and just live higher than the last born (...) Being advanced...like being more on top of my parents you know? Because they grew up and they had to fight for where they are, you know? And I want to show them what they did for me was a great thing.

The acknowledgement of and gratification for the financial, emotional and physical struggles endured by his parents during the apartheid era was not limited only to Zuko Dlamini. Patrick Mafu further illustrated how the constant reminder of parental suffering has permeated across generations: “I don’t know, just for me to see the world, to experience new things, you know, to… because they really don’t want me to end up… to struggle like they did.”

Patrick’s statement seems opposite to the findings of Kamper et al., (2009) who reported that middle-class Black South African adolescents shared the “general consumerism of South Africa's wealthy classes and many were detached from the history of the struggle for political freedom” (p. 71). However, the adolescent participants’ responses did support a further research finding of Kamper et al. (2009), that is that amongst Black middle-class adolescents a “general spirit of optimism and independence exists, paired with a strong desire to escape the trappings of poverty and to fulfil their career and social expectations” (p. 71). Further, adolescent participants’ responses clearly supported the research finds of Adragna
(2009) who suggested that, rather than acting as a restriction, career barriers in adolescents’ lives act as an incentive to achieve more highly than their parents.

One parent in particular, Mr Mafu, was so motivated in his desire to ensure that hardship was avoided by his son in the future, that he endured further financial suffering in order to financially assure Patrick of career choice freedom. While Mr Mafu experienced a realistic fear that by providing his son with the necessary career platform (i.e. by sending him to a prestigious school) it may result in considerable financial implications for himself and his wife, he was willing to take this risk. In the following rich extract from Mr Mafu’s interview, he explains why such a risk is necessary for the cessation of a perpetuating transgenerational cycle of poverty, as a result of apartheid, to occur:

I must be honest with you, one of the things that has kept us from the top, whether we are middle class or not, has been caused by the fact that we always want, as Africans, our children to work for us. We [the Mafu parents] don’t want such a situation and we believe in that in this family, that you get your career, you do this but not for us for you. So that with your career you can look after your own family later on, because sometimes we as old as we are, sometime we have to support our families and so on. We don’t want our children to end up supporting our family, where you have to support other people, when you have to look after somebody else. That is the problem at the present moment, we teach our children to be independent of each other, that is what we want as a family (...) We are not chasing after his money and all the like, like it used to be years before that (...) We want our children to be free of that yoke.
Parent participants also voiced further steps which they had taken in order to prevent the cycle of hardship continuing into their sons’ generation. Firstly, Mr Nyathi revealed that he had felt it necessary to exert considerable pressure on Sisa to make a financially motivated career choice: “When they choose careers they must ensure that it is a career that financially it is going to look after him and it is going to put him into a better place in society. The reason why I, I pushed him into accountancy is the world is made of earning money and if one can learn how to handle money (...) he will not struggle like I did struggle in life.”

Secondly, Mr Nyathi spoke of the pride which he voiced to his son regarding the criteria implemented by his son when establishing friendships. According to Mr Nyathi, “I admire him for one thing – he chooses his friends and he doesn’t choose losers or people that are not sort of ah progressing in life. He’ll quickly brush you off if you are not successful and I, I think that’s where he learns mostly (...) He doesn’t mix with people that he is not going to gain anything from.”

Furthermore, Mr Nyathi also disclosed his perceived need to financially support his son until Sisa is capable of financially supporting himself. The following excerpt demonstrates how Mr Nyathi felt that the failure to support Sisa until such a time as he was financially independent would render meaningless any previous sacrifices which he had made for his son:

It’s a crippling factor if you, you, close the financial support to your child until he can really stand on his own. And ah, it’s criminal also to bring a child in and say, “Fly” when he is not able to fly. You need to support him until such time that he he’s working...working and earning money.

Additionally, during their interviews both parent and adolescent participants portrayed education as being a vehicle of positive career change, capable of transforming financial hardship into financial prosperity. According to Mrs Nyathi: “Without education you are
nothing...Education opens up doors for you that is priority number one.” Similarly, despite possessing the qualities and showing promise of becoming a successful professional sportsman one day, Zuko Dlamini stated that he had made a decision to prioritise his education to the detriment of previously held sporting ambitions. According to Zuko:

It is work first and then play because, you know, I can excel more in my academics (...). Sports might take you nowhere and let’s say you get injured, you know? (...) If I like learn in my academics and all I might go somewhere.

Zuko further expressed that by attending his current school, renowned for its high quality education, he felt it would open up doorways to future career opportunities which may have remained locked, had he not been a member of this school.

The final area in which the ghost of apartheid emerged from the interviews as a factor influencing the career development of Black adolescent participants related to the existence of free access to career guidance opportunities at the adolescent participants’ school and the reluctance shown by adolescents to utilise such services. One reason for this trend was offered by Mr Mafu who explained that when he was younger, he had not been exposed to such opportunities. As a result, he reported that he preferred to encourage Patrick to follow career development methods which Mr Mafu was familiar with.

Sisa Nyathi offered a similar perspective to that of Mr Mafu. However, Sisa expressed that by not adopting similar career developmental styles as ‘westernised’ White South African parents (due to the legacy of apartheid), Black South African parents were denying their sons the opportunity to break free from the lower socio-economic status bracket:

I think that here in like South Africa, we still living in that past type mode, of like apartheid and like Black people will lower their minds type thing and that people aren’t emerging out of it and thinking, “Okay, we are all equal, so let’s just go do the same type of work, or same type of business as White
people, so that we can actually get into the middle class type of area.”

Therefore, although Mr Mafu felt that his decision was to the benefit of his son, stemming from a desire to prevent Patrick from experiencing future hardship, Sisa Nyathi’s perspective (offered from the view of an adolescent) understood this emerging trend as one which was a factor perpetuating future socioeconomic hardship amongst Black adolescent South Africans. Finally, the following extract demonstrates the message by Patrick Mafu’s parents for him to work hard in order to achieve a scholarship to university. According to Patrick:

It’s just… my parents have told me that (laughs) they won’t be paying for varsity, so I… they said that I should get um… they’ll set up a student loan or I should apply for scholarships and all of that, or for financial support from the university.

The above excerpt by Patrick not only highlights parental expectations for him to receive a tertiary education and avoid hardship, it further reflects the reality of Bardick and Bernes (2005) findings that, although learners may have the inherent ability and desire to achieve their career aspirations, the aspirations to meet such high expectations often fail to materialise due to inadequate resources to achieve them.

In conclusion, avoiding hardship was a premise informing many of the current career developmental behaviours of both parent participants and adolescent participants. Specific methods of preventing the potential hardship of adolescent participants which were mentioned by participants included: the provision of quality education for adolescent participants, regardless of further financial suffering as parents; the establishment of friendship circles based on an egocentric, self-propelling motive; the encouragement of adolescent participants by their parents to expand their career horizons, breaking free from the pattern of following one of the limited career paths available during apartheid; and
promises made by two parent participants to ensure that their son would be financially provided for until such a time as he was independent enough to take over the financial reigns from his parents.

Work hard and be resilient

The following subordinate theme explores the importance attached by adolescent participants to working hard, proving oneself, developing career goals, being steadfast, and portraying resilience, as a result of parent participants exerting pressure to excel academically, become successful and make them proud.

Emerging from interviews with both of Zuko Dlamini’s parents was the overt importance perceived by each parent participant as having an influence on their son’s career development. Mr Dlamini was of the opinion that it was vital for Zuko to learn to cope under pressure. Further, Mr Dlamini revealed the high academic standards which he expected of his son. Despite admitting that Zuko is currently performing “quite well”, Mr Dlamini reported that he has told his son that “he has got a lot of room for improvement.”

Mrs Dlamini voiced a desire for Zuko to become independent, steadfast and self-assured. Additionally, she highlighted a desire for her son to maintain and develop his physical, spiritual and psychological health, explaining that these were three essential components required to become a strong, resilient individual.

The effects of such desires and expectations being directly conveyed to adolescent participants is illustrated by Patrick Mafu who claimed: “She [Mrs Mafu] has taught me through lessons that I need to be hard working at everything. I need to persevere at everything.” Furthermore, Patrick revealed that he had learnt to become goal-oriented, constantly working towards mapped-out career objectives. Interestingly, Patrick’s father felt that if his son believed in the Mafu’s culture, drawing on Xhosa values, he would develop resiliency. Mr Mafu further explained this resiliency as a crucial component which would
One parent in particular, Mr Nyathi, expressed extremely high expectations of his son. Mr Nyathi disclosed that he felt it was his son’s responsibility to perform consistently at school, as well as “to show an interest in (...) what we [Mr and Mrs Nyathi] have moulded his son to become.” Further, Mr Nyathi was of the opinion that in order for Sisa to learn a lesson from his perceived failures, he would ensure that Sisa considered what he had done wrong and would not repeat such failures by showing Sisa overt disapproval and magnifying such failures in an effort to motivate a greater effort by his son to prevent future failures. The following extract from Mr Nyathi’s interview demonstrates how he responds to Sisa’s perceived failures:

I’m the one who always says when he’s done bad and I, I rub it in. I rub it in so that he can be angry so that he can get up and go. And he hates me for that; he doesn’t understand why am I doing it. (...) All failures I put a magnifying glass and make them bigger in his face (...) I’ve mentioned that he’s lazy, he’s not technical, that’s those are his disabilities (...) I always rub those things in also in terms of...you’re going to do this and force him to do it and even if he doesn’t like it.

Considering the above repercussions of failing to perform academically, Sisa verbalised the importance of a solid work ethic, remaining motivated and setting goals for himself. Further, Sisa revealed that his parents frequently reminded him to work hard in order to be able to obtain a bursary for his tertiary education. Lastly, Sisa appeared to have internalised the high standards set for himself by his father by expressing an ‘achieve at all costs’ attitude and leaving no room for doubt. Sisa’s unyielding motivation is illustrated by the following excerpt from his interview:
“Those standards I have to work to and I have to reach and achieve.”

In conclusion, this subordinate theme illustrated the overt expectations and instructions by parent participants for their sons to plan, set goals and excel academically, while also showing resilience when experiencing perceived failures. Furthermore, reprimanding was also verbalised as a method of maintaining academic excellence and unrelenting standards by one family of participants.

**Vicarious empowerment**

The following subordinate theme explores parents’ sentiments relating to the work ethic of their sons. Further, the vicarious empowerment of their sons by parent participants, as a result of their children having far greater opportunities than they did when they were adolescents during apartheid rule, is examined.

According to Mr Dlamini, the possibilities for Zuko, as a Black South African adolescent, to excel were endless. Mr Dlamini felt that there was “no limitation to potential” and that his son could pursue any career avenue he desired. Mrs Dlamini also expressed a positive attitude in relation to the career opportunities of her son. She explained that, although she and her husband had not had the opportunities to pursue their true career aspirations as a result of apartheid, her son’s generation would soon be able to reap the rewards of their parents’ struggles in the past by being presented with unrestricted career choice freedom in the future. Mrs Dlamini’s optimistic outlook on Zuko’s future career opportunities is demonstrated by the following extract:

Freedom now - we don’t enjoy it. We don’t enjoy it but we know that it is going to be enjoyed by you [Zuko]. It is only you [Zuko] and your kids that will enjoy it (...) People don’t sit back and say, “Because you are Black there is nothing that I can do”. You can do everything that somebody else can do. You don’t be afraid of anything that comes your way.
Zuko Dlamini’s parents were not the only family members who expressed optimism about their sons’ future. According to Zuko, the struggles endured by his parents to overcome the restrictions of apartheid rule have enabled him to be “a bit wealthy” in the future: “We can explore how the White people live now and how they got taught.” Interestingly, by saying “we can explore”, rather than “I can explore”, it appears that Zuko also attributes and perceives his future achievements as achievements realised by the family as a whole, rather than by himself as an individual. Therefore, similar to the manner in which Mr and Mrs Dlamini are empowering Zuko, he too is empowering his parents.

Mrs Nyathi also expressed her satisfaction related to her son’s current career opportunities, saying “I look at the children (...) I mean, really you compare them to us, they are far better.” In congruence with this perception, Sisa Nyathi expressed his gratitude towards his parents for the intergenerational improvement in terms of potential career prospects he was currently situated in, saying:

I think, like our generation is different to my parents because of like their experiences of what like happened in the past because our generation has lived through and like been not part of the past, like part of apartheid, and we have benefitted like majorly from what our parents fought for us to not like go through.

Additionally, a further form of vicarious empowerment was revealed by Sisa Nyathi. He disclosed that his mother had recently been encouraging him to travel overseas once he had finished matric. According to Sisa, Mrs Nyathi perceived such a (previously unattainable) choice as an excellent opportunity for him to experience personal growth, as well as to earn an income while gaining practical confirmation of his current career interests.
In conclusion, this subordinate theme suggested that both parent and adolescent participants possessed a positive outlook with regards to adolescent participants’ future career opportunities. Participants attributed such opportunities to the efforts made by parent participants in the past to challenge the apartheid regime. Furthermore, while it was found that parent participants empowered their sons, living vicariously through them in the process, a possibility that adolescent participants also empower their parents by considering personal achievements as collective achievement also exists.

**Ambivalence regarding Black economic empowerment**

The following subordinate theme discusses the mixed feelings and perceptions expressed by two of the Black adolescent participants regarding Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in South Africa.

According to Zuko Dlamini: “In South Africa we do (us Black South Africans do) have the front foot and all”. While consensus between adolescent participants was generally established regarding Zuko’s perception, Sisa Nyathi expressed ambivalence regarding the process of BEE. He perceived BEE to be a regressive concept, in which Black South Africans “think that in this world that they should get better reference or better worth”. Sisa voiced further disapproval of the BEE process, stating:

“I don’t think that is right because I think if a person is good enough they should be in that spot or in that place and not because of your colour or just because your freedom is like more better or something like that. So like I think like if a person is good enough, he must be there and not because of the colour [of his skin] (...) It has to be on merit.”

In an attempt to further explain his belief, Sisa Nyathi expressed that his ambivalence regarding BEE was due to the feelings of guilt which he derived from knowing that his future career position may not be secured based on his abilities, but rather be attributed to his skin
colour. He expressed further guilt surrounding the possibility that in the future another individual with greater abilities than himself may be refused a career position in an effort to employ Sisa due to the fact that he is Black. The example provided by Sisa below clearly illustrates Sisa’s current inner conflict regarding BEE:

These days Black people have more advantage and like more like, more opportunities right? But then, it also limits like White people now because (...) if a White person is trying to go into like becoming a doctor, and he is about like, he’s a ‘A’ student and he gets an ‘A’ aggregate overall...and a Black student comes and he gets B’s, I understand like okay right I understand that maybe the Black person goes ahead, but then what about the white person? (...) I don’t know if they can like maybe make that equal type thing, because like that person that has worked so hard to get there and has got the marks, has got everything, but now can’t get through because of the colour of his skin and I think that’s unfair.

Despite disapproving of racially motivated employment quotas in South Africa, Sisa Nyathi also expressed enthusiasm with regards to the future career opportunities which he predicted he would be confronted with as a result of BEE. The following extract captures Sisa’s ambivalence regarding his future career prospects, revealing both a sense of joy, as well as the additional perceived pressure to make the most of this situation:

I feel excited for the opportunities that I have because of the skin colour that I have but then I also feel nervous because like if I fail in that opportunity like it is all gone and stuff like that and then that person that could have made it ahead of me, will be disappointed and like kind of broken type of thing, but ja, that is how I would say, you know.
Interestingly, despite the impact of apartheid on Black adolescent participants’ career development being voiced by all participants, only one adolescent participant discussed the impact of BEE on his future career.

**Great Expectations**

The following superordinate theme explores parent participants’ expectations of their sons to comprehensively research potential career options, display a work ethic meeting stringent parental standards and, ultimately, ensure that parents are not disappointed in them. Furthermore, this superordinate theme will explain and compare the differing definitions of success offered by parent participants and their sons, as well as the covert message of indebtedness conveyed towards parent participants by their sons.

**Indebtedness**

The following subordinate theme discusses the considerable amount of pressure exerted on adolescent participants by their parents to select careers that gain parental approval. Furthermore, parental sacrifices are discussed as a factor contributing to the high expectations of their sons held by parent participants, as well as to the feeling of indebtedness felt towards their parents that was expressed by adolescent participants.

During Zuko Dlamini’s interview he verbalised that he felt obliged to repay his parents for their financial contribution and sacrifices made to ensure that he received an excellent education. However, Zuko described that this repayment would not be in the form of financially reimbursing his parents but rather by proving to them that their personal and financial investments in him were worth it by making a success of his career. Further, owing to Mr and Mrs Dlamini’s sacrifices made for their son, Zuko felt that only those careers associated with a specific level of prestige would fully repay this debt, adding: “I can’t just let my parents pay a certain amount of money, you know, a big amount of money just to become a, you know, taxi driver.”
On the other hand, Mr Mafu insisted that repayment for his personal sacrifices as a parent to Patrick were not necessary. However, a contradiction arose during Mr Mafu’s interview as he indirectly conveyed a message that by providing an education for his son, he was entitled to demand a career choice from Patrick which would make Mr Mafu proud. According to Mr Mafu:

“I don’t want your [Mr Mafu’s children’s] money. I always tell them, “I don’t want a cent out of you. I want you to get educated, to get a career I can be proud of.”

Patrick Mafu further revealed that his career choices were limited by Mr Mafu, claiming: “It has happened. It really has happened! I can’t lie, that it started. I think it was last or the year before, my dad started mapping out my [career] decisions for me and it was kind of weird because it was really not the stuff that I wanted to go into.” Despite Patrick not having an aspiration to pursue the careers which he feels are being chosen for him by his father, he verbalised that he had not ruled out the possibility of pursuing one of the careers identified by Mr Mafu: “The finance is a route but it’s, it’s really not for me. But it is what my dad expects from me.” From the above extract it is apparent that Mr Mafu had already established clear career boundaries within which Patrick was allowed to ‘freely and independently’ make career choices. Patrick’s response to his father’s career aspirations for his son supports the research findings of Miller and Brown (2005) who reported that in collectivist cultures, parents may evoke feelings of shame or guilt if a specific career path is not followed by adolescents (Miller & Brown, 2005; Young et al., 2001).

Despite expressing that he expected no remuneration from Sisa for providing him with a high quality education, Mr Nyathi contradicted himself when he was asked about Sisa’s responsibilities towards his Xhosa community by stating: “You are compelled to look
after your family but not really the community.” Therefore, although Mr Nyathi did not expect financial remuneration, ‘payment’ was expected of Sisa in the form of caring for his parents when they were unable to do so for themselves. Mr Nyathi further contradicted his above statement later in the interview when he indicated that it was an expectation of Sisa to financially assist his Xhosa community members: “You need to pour it [money] back into the community and then they will make sure that you are comfortable and you live a happy life and a lavish life because they, they, will do a lot of things for you without you asking.”

In conclusion, adolescent participants described a considerable amount of pressure by their parents to select approval-gaining careers. Furthermore, parental sacrifices were discussed as a means of leverage, instilling feelings of indebtedness in adolescent participants towards their parents, even causing one adolescent to consider a career path chosen by his father of which he had no interest.

**Don’t disappoint us**

The following subordinate theme is closely linked to Indebtedness, as it discusses the additional pressure exerted on adolescent participants to live up to parental career expectations due to parental sacrifices to afford better career opportunities for their sons. However, this subordinate theme also introduces the belief of the son as a symbol of the family name and this resultant additional pressure to excel is discussed in this subsection of the results.

According to Mr Dlamini, Zuko was constantly told to apply himself academically, dedicating the majority of his time towards his studies by his father in an effort to achieve a successful career in the future - one which Mr Dlamini could be proud of. Mrs Dlamini also expressed high expectations of her son, articulating the need for Zuko to maximise his potential, while also becoming a principled young man with sound moral fibre. Considering such elevated parental expectations of him, Zuko Dlamini unsurprisingly conveyed his
commitment to, and fear of, disappointing his parents and potentially being perceived as a poor reflection on the Dlamini family name: “I have to discipline myself you know (...) I must [not] do wrong because people will see me and my family as being (...) wrongful people, you know? (...) I don’t want to bring my family name down. It has been so good, you know, and why should I be the one to bring it down?” Fear of disappointing his parents by reflecting poorly on his family name was also conveyed by Patrick Mafu. In the following excerpt, Patrick describes how his parents use the Mafu family name as a method of ensuring that he continues to produce academic work of a high standard:

When, I do badly in a test or something, they’ll [Mr and Mrs Mafu] say “Ja [Yes], your matric results next year will be seen by everyone” and, you know, when Black people are so close (no matter if you’re married or not) that they always look for that person’s son or daughter. (...) It just tells me that they just want to boast with whatever I do...boast to other people.

According to Patrick, his goal after finishing school is to make his parents proud. Patrick admitted that his parents had adopted an uncompromising parenting style, illustrating this by providing the following example:

I was taught from a very young age that you can’t climb the ladder of success with your hands in your pockets (...) If I have hands in my pockets or whatever, my dad will still ask me, “What are you doing with hands in your pockets?” (...) My parents have been so hard on me to set an example and everything (...) It’s different for me because I’m the male.

Mr Mafu further explained Patrick’s reference to the importance of being a male in a Xhosa family, as well as the added expectations of him not to disappoint his parents as a result of this by stating, “In African families, I must say that your eldest son must be exemplary (...) You expect your son to have a career to be respected, to be disciplined, but at
the other end of the scale, you expect him (...) to take over the mantle and be able to go on with the tradition of the family.” Lastly, when asked what he felt his role was with regard to his own career development, Patrick replied that he felt it was merely to choose a career path which his parents would be proud of. This conditional support and desire not to disappoint his parents is described by Patrick in the following extract:

It is just to make the parents happy in whatever I choose (...) My parents would [be happy] knowing that I have made the right choice. I know my parents will be happy for me.

In conclusion, this subordinate theme explored the pressure on adolescent participants to meet parental career expectations. Further, the impact of Xhosa culture as a contributing factor towards such expectations was made apparent by the research participants. Lastly, the additional expectations placed on adolescent participants not to disappoint their parents as a result of their gender and the importance of Xhosa males to uphold and carry their family name was found.

**Do your homework**

The subordinate theme of *do your homework* explores the expectations held by parent participants for their sons to thoroughly research their future career paths. Further, the requirements of adolescent participants to establish the feasibility of future career choices and the financial prospects thereof are described, as well as the need to gain exposure and experience in such areas.

Mr Dlamini emphasised the degree of importance that he attached to keeping an open mind, remaining open to new experiences and exploring other individuals’ perspectives. He added that Zuko may benefit greatly by spending time abroad after he matriculates as he described the overseas working environments as “very much challenging”. Mr Dlamini expressed the desire for Zuko to gain practical experience overseas and to “then bring it back
home.” Mrs Dlamini expressed a similar need for Zuko to gain further knowledge of, experience in, and exposure to his future career path by becoming involved in volunteer work. According to Mrs Dlamini:

If you can be involved in volunteer work, I take it as if he [Zuko] will be exposed to many things. He will be able to get experience of how things are happening out there. So that by the time he goes into whatever, at least he has got that broad idea, because he has been to these he knows.

Similarly to the response by Mr Dlamini, Sisa Nyathi’s parents also voiced the desire for their son to gain exposure by travelling and working overseas. Mrs Nyathi believed that international exposure would provide a solid career foundation and potentially broaden Sisa’s future career opportunities. Mr Nyathi echoed the need for Sisa to gain international exposure by providing the following example:

You go and work in Japan and you go and work in Italy and you come back to South Africa and you are far above the other person that has been here and staying here. Because what you learn in your way is more absorbed and more applicable than what you learn in a book (...) You really have to open your...or stretch those frontiers and make them as wide as anything, so that you can absorb as much as you can absorb and not restrict them by just confining them into one spot.

However, it was not only the parent participants who reported the desire to gain international exposure. In congruence with the research findings of Kuit (2006) and Kamper et al., (2009) who found that a large percentage of Black South African adolescents possessed the desire to work overseas, returning to South Africa in the future, all of the learner participants reported the same aspiration.
Apart from the message by parents for their sons to gain exposure within areas of career interest, Mr Mafu felt that his son should ‘do his homework’ when making career decisions, meaning that he expected Patrick to spend time carefully weighing up the costs and benefits of each of his potential career choices, as well as considering the feasibility of being successful in each career by matching them with his abilities. This message was similar to the research findings of Kuit (2006) in which inherent abilities were identified by adolescents as having an impact on adolescents’ career development.

The following extract from Mr Mafu’s interview demonstrates the importance he attached towards Patrick ‘doing his homework’. It also shows Mr Mafu’s disapproval regarding the manner in which he perceived Patrick to have come to a decision to pursue physiotherapy:

Don’t just at the spur of the moment say, “I want to be physiotherapist” only because you want to to a physiotherapist (...) Never did you think about what subjects are being done there. Did you research? I want to say to you, “There is internet. Here...Check! What is that career? If you want to do that career, what does it entail and what does it want? What is the future of that career?” Finished!

The manner in which this need to research career choices had been instilled by Mr Mafu appears to have been internalised by Patrick who expressed that recently he had been spent a lot of time researching each of his potential career choices. Mr Dlamini held the same opinion as Mr Mafu with regards to the researching of future careers. According to Mr Dlamini:
I think he must (...) go and do some research in the career of his choice, you
know? That is one thing that he has done, with our assistance.

Of all the families participating within the study, possibly the most convinced of the
perceived need for adolescents to research their future careers was the Nyathi family. Mr
Nyathi spoke approvingly about the manner in which Sisa carefully contemplated and
compared each of his potential career options, taking into consideration the predicted
lifestyles each career would be able to provide him with. Mrs Nyathi added that Sisa had
already consulted with his school guidance counsellor, as well as receiving external career
assessment in the form of psychometric testing to assist with the making of an informed
career choice. Lastly, Sisa Nyathi expressed his belief in the importance of performing a
thorough background check on all of the potential firms which he was potentially considering
to apply for a position in the future, in order to have an understanding of what each job
description entailed, as well as what would be expected of him by specific firms.

In conclusion, this subordinate theme explored the consensus established among the
research participants for the perceived importance of gaining career exposure and experience,
as well as the need for adolescent participants to meticulously plan, explore and research each
potential career option in order to make an informed career decision.

**Defining success**

The following subordinate theme of defining success compares and describes the
differences between the perceived definitions of success offered by parent participants and
adolescent participants.

A clear difference existed between the manner in which parent participants
understood career success and career happiness and the manner in which adolescent
participants described the same concepts. Generally, parents perceived financial income as
the perceived definition of future career happiness and personal satisfaction. However,
adolescent participants did not offer the same definition. According to the sons of parent participants, financial income played a small role in determining career success and future happiness. Rather, the factor considered by adolescent participants as accounting for a prosperous future career and career satisfaction was the ability to pursue a career path in which one is passionate and in which personal pleasure can be derived.

While speaking about the importance of money, Mr Dlamini explained that financial constraints derived from a poor career income severely limit the degree to which his son could experience satisfaction in life, as it would lead to the prevention of experiences which he associated with lavish lifestyles, such as travelling and regular holidays. Mrs Dlamini further reiterated Mr Dlamini’s perspective regarding money in a more succinct and overt manner: “If you have got money you will be happy, and you will make your family happy as well. So they go hand in hand.” This perspective, which was generally shared amongst parent participants, did not go unnoticed by their sons. One adolescent participant who verbalised specific changes which he had noticed as a result of his parents’ belief in the importance of future income as a direct contributor to future happiness was Patrick Mafu. Patrick revealed how his parents made frequent comments conveying their desire for him to acquire material possessions, such as flashy cars and expensive houses in the future, without consideration towards Patrick’s future lifestyle aspirations. According to Patrick:

My dad started mapping out my decisions for me and it was kind of weird because it was really not the stuff that I wanted to go into. He just, as you said any professional career with money and he just, he was thinking of (...) I can’t be unhappy in a job that pays lots of money.

Sisa Nyathi also reported experiencing pressure exerted by his parents to select a career which would provide financial prosperity. However, unlike his parents, Sisa reported that money was not a factor ultimately influencing his final career decision. Rather, Sisa
explained: “I think like what I want to become, like it has to be on what I am interested in...Like what I enjoy doing and not like something what my parents or friends or something [desire] or because of like the money that comes out of it.” In support of previous research findings such as those of Hirschi, Niles, and Akos (2010), Kuit (2006) and Rogers, Creed and Glendon (2008), all of the Black adolescent participants responded that their personalities significantly influenced their career development.

In conclusion, adolescent participants regarded successful career choices as ones which were able to provide the best fit of personality, motivation, and career interests, rather than parent participants’ perceptions of successful career decisions being synonymous with wealth.

**Coconuts Fall Far From the Tree**

The decision to name this superordinate theme *coconuts fall far from the tree* was made for two reasons. Firstly, the title alludes to the well-known idiom, ‘The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree’, meaning that children often grow up to resemble parents, either physically or through the replication, or upholding of, similar behaviours or perceptions to their parents. However, as will be made evident during the description of the subordinate theme to follow, the perceptions voiced by adolescent participants regarding the value of their Xhosa culture and maintaining of both family and cultural traditions differed greatly to those of their parents. Hence, the predicate *far from the tree* was aptly substituted.

Secondly, rather than continuing with the conventional reflection of children as ‘apples’ within the aforementioned idiom, a further substitution of ‘coconuts’ was made. The term coconut was specifically chosen as it was used by parent participants as a jesting metaphor explaining the Black outward appearance of their children, while remaining White on the inside as a result of acculturation. The discussion of this phenomenon, as well as the fears expressed by parent participants surrounding their sons’ loss of culture, traditions and
heritage will now be explored in the following subordinate theme.

**Fear and acculturation**

The first parent participant to introduce the concept of being a ‘coconut’ was Mrs Mafu who said, “Patrick is like...he is just a Black with White inside, like a coconut. He lives in other...(laughs) in other planets. Mrs Mafu also alluded indirectly to this metaphor saying, “That is how Sisa is. He is dark outside but inside he is White. Lastly, the third mother participant, Mrs Nyathi, also referred to her son as being a coconut. In the following excerpt, Mrs Nyathi blames herself and Mr Nyathi for precipitating the onset of this perceived phenomenon by sending Sisa to various schools in which the majority of learners were White:

> We have got ourselves to blame (...) We have made them to become those coconuts (...) All the friends that he still has got today, it is children that he started with at primary school and moved over to [Sisa’s current school] and he has been with those friends all the time and the Black friends that have come in, he mixes [with] them at school, but they never even come and visit here. He goes out to other of the white friends.

Mr Nyathi also commented on the manner in which Sisa tends to befriend White adolescents, as well as adopting behaviours which he perceived as being atypical of Black South African Xhosa adolescents. According to Mr Nyathi, “Sisa doesn’t see culture (...) Sisa thinks he is White because he is mostly moving with Whites and, eh, (...) whatever he does is pure White.” After being asked if he felt that this term was a correct reflection of him, Sisa reluctantly responded, “Um, like to a certain extent...I think maybe...Ja [Yes]...To be honest, ja [yes].”
One parent participant, Mrs Dlamini, expressed her fears of the Xhosa culture disappearing in generations to come. According to Mrs Dlamini: “The cultural things, the rituals that we [parents] do, they must know because what we tell them should be passed their way. We don’t (want) the culture to die. It must go on.” Parent participants further expressed a desire to attempt to reverse the degree of acculturation of their sons by attempting to educate and include their sons in as many cultural celebrations and ceremonies as possible. In the following extract, Mrs Nyathi describes her husband’s particular effort to do so with Sisa:

Especially with us, with our culture with ‘going to the bush’ [i.e. a traditional Xhosa circumcision ceremony], so he [Mr Nyathi] prepares him [Sisa] and tells him what the significance of that is and ensuring that he doesn’t miss out on the culture of the family. If there are cultural celebrations happening he will take him.

Additionally, during her interview Mrs Nyathi provided two examples of the manner in which she had witnessed acculturation in Sisa and the degree to which this clearly concerned her. Firstly, in the following excerpt, Mrs Nyathi describes how Sisa’s grades for Xhosa had gradually declined to the point where he has failed his mother tongue on multiple occasions:

It is actually a big problem I will tell you. It is something that is actually disturbing me. When I look at Sisa’s results at school, he is lagging very much behind on Xhosa. He can speak the language but having to write it down, is a total, total disaster and I think he has failed Xhosa several times and for me being our language it is supposed to be our home language, it is actually a disgrace for him to do that (...) Sisa will write his composition or whatever in English, and then [father’s name] would have to translate that to
him in Xhosa, because he cannot do that himself.

In the second example, Mrs Nyathi reported that, “Sisa doesn’t see colour” and described this as problematic and as a weakness as it resulted in him interacting with and befriendng White adolescents, resulting in an inability to relate to Black adolescents:

One incident that I didn’t like at [Sisa’s school] (...) We had to host children from [town’s name] and at [school’s name] most of the children are Black and come from the Black homes and you would see that when these Black children are around at home, he doesn’t want to mix with them (...) I said to him, “I don’t like what you are doing. I mean, these are your brothers. They get first preference. You should be treating them even better than your White friends” and he doesn’t seem to understand. He said, “No mommy. I do the same to everyone. It is just that I am not used to them. There is nothing common that we can talk about, you know?” Those are the things to me, it is… I see that as a weakness.

Sisa’s response to Mrs Nyathi appears to support the research findings of Steyn, et al. (2010) which suggest that a new, non-racial generation is emerging in South Africa. An explanation for the acculturation which he had experienced was also provided by Sisa, who claimed that he perceived culture to be an outdated concept in modern times by stating, “I think that culture is backwards.” Furthermore, Sisa also described the manner in which he perceived the attendance of his English school as having a major impact on his restricted use of the Xhosa language:

School is English, so basically, the majority of the time you have to speak English. Like during class and stuff, so, that’s basically and like 90% of the time I am like around my white friends type thing and so like my, the mother tongue has like kind of like slipped away from me.
Therefore, in contrast with the research findings of Akande (2010), Sisa decided to adopt the westernised youth culture of his former Model-C school, distancing himself from his own Xhosa culture in the process. This choice appears to be the option most often chosen by South African Black middle class youth, as research suggests that the influence of traditional values and cultural norms on Black South African adolescents is gradually diminishing (Kamper, Badenhorst & Steyn, 2009). Further indications of acculturation are demonstrated by Sisa’s shift in primary language. This shift supports the findings of Deumert (2010) who found that a steady language shift among many South Africans since 1994 has occurred, particularly from the indigenous African languages to English in urban Black communities. Additionally, Sisa’s adoption of English and rejection of his limited usage of his mother tongue supports the findings of Mestrie (2008), who reported that youth members of the South African Black middle class were located at the centre of the gradual language shift, many of which have become monolingual, proficient in only English.

Although two adolescent participants acknowledged that they had experienced degrees of acculturation, one ‘apple’ did happen to fall ‘close to the tree’. Zuko Dlamini was the only adolescent participant who shared the same beliefs regarding the importance of his cultural heritage as his parents. According to Zuko, one “can’t just break the culture, you know, of your family or of a Black society (...) because people see you as a rude person (...) Culture is a very important thing to each and every one of us (...) and we should stick to it and listen to your ancestors, and what they say because it has been said that they know what future we have you know.” Further, in the following extract Zuko explains that, even if he did decide to live overseas in the future, his culture would still remain unchanged:

Wherever I am in the world you know, I can’t just leave my culture behind, it has to be with me because my ancestors are still looking at me right now you know, so I can’t just leave them behind and say okay well I am overseas now,
I should act like a Black American you know? I should just be myself and not change my culture in any way.

Interestingly, Zuko was also the only adolescent participant still residing in a formal settlement. Therefore, in contrast with the suggestion of Ikalafeng (1996), who reported that a cultural tug-of-war between traditional Black culture and White culture appears to have become established, regardless of whether members of the South African Black middle class reside in formal settlements or relocate to traditional White suburbs, cultural conflict was only reported by research participants residing in suburbs typically regarded as middle class. A possibility further exists that by moving away from Xhosa community members in order to reside in areas typically referred to as middle class, the Mafu and Nyathi parents may have increased the risk of acculturation for their sons. Thus, although participants supported the findings of Viljoen (1994) and Greef and Loubser (2008) in verbalising a strong commitment to the family as a social institution (Viljoen, 1994), the lack of communal embeddedness and connectedness of Patrick Mafu and Sisa Nyathi with other Xhosa community members indicated a movement away from the concept of ubuntu. This movement is in contrast with traditional Xhosa culture (Du Plessis, 2001; Outwater, Abrahams & Campbell, 2005).

Surprisingly, although differing beliefs were expressed by adolescent and parent participants regarding the importance of culture, consensus between participants was established with regard to the perceived (lack of) influence of culture on the career development of adolescents. Therefore, in contrast to the findings of Young et al. (2001), none of the South African Black middle class participants reported culture as a factor impacting on the career development of the adolescent participants. However, although one adolescent participant acknowledged that culture did not directly impact on his career development, a contradiction with this statement was evident as he had previously acknowledged the importance of career counselling (and the benefit he had received from
this) but that the use of career counsellors was not yet being implemented by members of his culture.

In conclusion, acculturation was reported by all participants residing in suburbs typically considered as middle class, while no acculturation was expressed by the participants opting to continue residing in a formal settlement. Fear of acculturation was also reported by parent participants, as well as the desire and effort to attempt to reverse this process. In support of the findings of Kamper et al., (2009) who suggested that the career development of adolescents situated within emerging Black South African middle class may not be impacted on by such influences, culture was considered by all participants as having no influence on the career development of adolescent participants. Adolescent participants’ perspectives regarding the importance of culture closely supported the findings of Tyson’ and Stones’ (2002) study of South African adolescents, which suggested that being an individual member of a broad cultural group is no longer an assurance that the individual will identify with that culture and its traditional values. Further, participants’ responses support the research findings by Kamper, Badenhorst and Steyn (2009) that the influence of traditional values and cultural norms of Black South African adolescents is gradually diminishing.

In the following chapter, a conclusion of all research findings will be made, as well as a discussion regarding the limitations of the study and the recommendations for further potential areas of research in the future which were derived from the current study.
Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

After having contextualized the study’s result in theory and previous research in Chapter 5, this chapter will begin by providing a brief summary of the MSCI (Adolescent) findings, followed by a broader reflection on the IPA findings presented in Chapter 5. Subsequently, the limitations of the study will be identified and discussed, followed by recommendations for future career research.

MSCI Findings

All research participants were able to complete the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets. Further, all adolescent participants verbalised that they had found this booklet to be a useful tool which encouraged them to reflect on their career development and the many systemic influences which had an impact thereon. The MSCI (Adolescent) findings also served to highlight both the individual nature of career development, as well as the similarities reflected across participants’ responses. Although the majority of influences deemed to have had an impact on the career development of adolescent participants were selected from those provided in the booklet, a number of additional influences were also included by some participants.

A number of influences within the individual system were acknowledged by research participants’ responses as having an impact on the career development of South African Black middle class adolescents. Such influences included adolescents’ personalities, values and abilities. In contrast with previous research trends (Young et al., 2001), no adolescent participants acknowledged culture as having an impact on their career development. Similarly, despite one mother participant and one father participant acknowledging the influence of culture in their MSCI (Adolescent) booklets, such participants later explained that, although they perceived culture as playing a major role in shaping their sons’ personal
development, they felt that it did not influence the adolescent participants’ career development.

In correlation with research trends, two social system influences of adolescent career development were reported by participants as having an impact on the career development of adolescents, namely parents (Buthelezi et al., 2009; Diemer, 2007; Domene et al., 2007; Maite, 2008; Palos & Drobot, 2010; Salami & Aremu, 2007; Schultheiss, 2006; Wong & Liu, 2010) and teachers (Dullabh, 2004; Helwig, 2008; Otto, 2000). Although parents and teachers were acknowledged as having an impact on career development, five of the research participants also reported teachers as being perceived as second parents, resulting in the yielding of a novel finding unrelated to previous research.

Environmental-societal system influences of adolescent career development accounted for the majority of STF influences acknowledged by participants as having an impact on adolescent career development. This finding was interesting and bolsters previous researchers’ calls (McMahon & Patton, 1995; McMahon & Watson, 2002, 2009) for the use of qualitative research methods using both MSCI (Adolescent) booklets and the STF, as both resources were able to excavate context-specific environmental-societal influences on the career development of Black South African adolescents. Arguably, such influences might not have been accounted for by traditional, quantitative research approaches. An example of such factors identified by participants as influencing adolescent participants’ career development, and correlating with research trends, included financial support (Kuit, 2006), the opportunity to work overseas (Kuit, 2006), job availability and geographical location (Christmas-Best & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2001; Hancock, 2009; Kuit, 2006).

A methodological finding was the successful testing of the efficacy of the use of the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets among parent participants. The accomplishment of data collection using the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets without producing further research
limitations or research dilemmas correlates with the researcher’s suggestion that this innovative research process was of a successful nature. Further, the MSCI formed an essential pillar on which the research stands, as it provided a foundation from which subsequent interviews were based. Therefore, the MSCI (Adolescent) provided a map of adolescent career development that was subsequently elaborated in the stories and perspectives revealed by the research participants.

**IPA Findings**

Each of the Black South African adolescent participants acknowledged that their parents influenced their career development. However, the roles expected of mothers and fathers differed considerably. Firstly, the role of mothers with regard to the career development of their sons was acknowledged by parent and adolescent participants as being providers of nurturance, as well as the primary source of emotional, psychological, and physical support for their sons. Further, a power dynamic was described by two mother participants who expressed feelings of powerlessness in relation to their husbands and the insignificant degree of influence they felt they had on their son’s career guidance and upbringing. Such a dynamic voiced by the two mother participants is interesting as previous research literature has identified adolescents’ mothers as the parental figure having the most powerful influence on adolescent career development (Dawkins, 1989; June & Fooks, 1980; Thomas, 1986). Although both mother participants felt powerless in terms of their perceived inability to impact on their sons’ career choices, they may actually have the greatest influence on the adolescents’ career development.

Secondly, in contrast with the two mother participants, fathers were acknowledged by all mother and adolescent participants as fulfilling an authoritative role, as well as being a provider of career guidance and a teacher of cultural traditions and family heritage by six participants. Although differing parental role expectations were acknowledged by
participants, three parent participants voiced the desire to adopt a more collaborative parenting style by assuming a mutual sharing of parental roles, thereby increasing the degree of open, honest communication between parents and the amount of bidirectional communication between parents and their sons.

Therefore, although the role of Xhosa culture and traditional family roles was not explicitly acknowledged by any research participants as having an influence on Black South African adolescents’ career development, it clearly has an implicit effect thereon, as it influenced the family dynamics and upbringing of adolescent participants which informed the manner in which adolescent participants’ career choices were addressed and handled by various family members. Resultantly, Xhosa culture was found to covertly prescribe clearly defined family roles related to Black South African adolescents’ career development. Such family roles appeared to be resistant to change, despite this desire for more collaborative parenting being voiced by three parent participants.

Further, only the participants still residing in a formal settlement expressed the belief that all adult community members within their local area acted as parental figures to each others’ children, and were respected as such. This finding is suggestive of a cultural shift by the emerging South African Black middle class participants residing in suburbs typically regarded as middle class, as it illustrates the decreasing reliance on ubuntu by such participants when relocating to middle class suburbs away from traditional Xhosa community members. This cultural shift, and acculturation, was further demonstrated by the adoption of English as a primary home language of communication by two adolescent participants, as well as the reference to culture as a “backwards concept” by one adolescent participant.

A fear of such acculturation of their sons was reported by four parent participants, as well as the desire and efforts made by such parents to attempt to reverse this process. Acculturation was reported by all participants residing in suburbs typically considered as
middle class, while no acculturation was expressed by participants opting to continue residing in a formal settlement. This suggests that the relocation of Xhosa South African families to middle class areas has direct implications on the culture of such adolescents, potentially resulting in the acculturation of Black South African adolescents. However, despite the adolescent participants residing in middle class suburbs acknowledging acculturation, evidence of adherence to traditional Xhosa family roles and structures was made apparent. Indications of such included the participants’ extant formalised patriarchal family structures, the continued traditional Xhosa belief of males being family breadwinners, and the perception of the firstborn son as the role model to all siblings and as the symbol of the family legacy.

Parent participants expressed conditional support toward their sons’ future career choices while, at the same time, attempting to portray their support as being unconditional. Therefore, parent participants placed emphasis on the value of their son’s autonomous career decision-making abilities, while challenging such decisions if they were not up to their standard of approval. This further demonstrated a method employed by parent participants to avoid responsibility for their son’s potential problematic career decisions in the future. Lastly, parent participants conveyed the message of ‘do this but don’t blame me’ with regard to the career decisions of adolescent participants. This was illustrated by the mapping out of ‘approval-gaining’ career avenues by parent participants for their sons, while promoting the façade of their adolescent participants’ autonomous career decision-making abilities as a method of absolving themselves of any blame in the future for regrettable career choices.

The legacy of apartheid in South Africa was possibly the greatest factor both directly and indirectly influencing adolescents’ career development, despite such adolescents having not lived through this era. Parental behaviours and perspectives were largely informed by the lens of apartheid and the experience of having had to endure the hardship and suffering
associated with this era both during and after the abolition thereof. This illustrated the manner in which past events permeated across generations, influencing both current and future career decisions made by adolescents, as well as the nature in which guidance and suggestions were received from their parents. Resultantly, avoiding hardship was a premise informing many of the current career developmental behaviours of both parent participants and adolescent participants. Specific ways to prevent future hardship mentioned by participants included: the provision of quality education for adolescent participants (regardless of whether this resulted in further financial suffering for the parents); the establishment of friendship circles based on an egocentric, self-propelling motive; the encouragement of adolescent participants by their parents to expand their career horizons, breaking free from the pattern of following one of the limited career paths available to the parents during apartheid; and promises made by two parent participants to ensure that their son would be financially provided for until such time as he was independent enough to take over the financial reigns from his parents.

A positive outlook with regard to adolescent participants’ future career opportunities was verbalised by all participants. Participants attributed such opportunities to the efforts made by parent participants in overcoming career barriers of the apartheid era. Furthermore, while it was found that parent participants empowered their sons, living vicariously through them in the process, a possibility that adolescent participants also empower their parents by considering personal achievements as collective achievement also exists. It has already been suggested that the efficacy of ubuntu amongst Xhosa South Africans notably decreased in efficacy when relocating to suburbs typically regarded as middle class. However the spirit of ubuntu appears to still be apparent, as illustrated by the manner in which adolescent Xhosa participants perceived individual achievements as being a reflection of a collective familial effort. Lastly, overt expectations and instructions by parent participants were apparent
regarding their expectations of adolescents to plan, set goals and excel academically, while showing resilience when experiencing perceived failures.

Adolescent participants also described a considerable degree of pressure exerted on them by their parents to select approval-gaining careers. Additionally, parental sacrifices were discussed as a means of leverage, instilling in adolescents feelings of indebtedness towards their parents. Research findings revealed additional expectations placed on adolescent participants not to disappoint their parents as a result of their gender, their birth order and the importance of Xhosa males to uphold and carry their family name.

Adolescent participants regarded successful career choices as ones which are able to provide the best fit of personality, passion, and career interests, rather than parent participants’ perceptions of successful career decisions being synonymous with wealth. This discrepancy between parent and adolescent participants’ definitions of success is suggestive of a further cultural shift in which adolescent participants have been exposed to and influenced by westernised cultures, while parent participants’ perceptions of success were firmly related to the struggles which they endured during apartheid. Father participants further indicated a sense of duty with regard to ensuring a successful career choice by their sons, as well as having preconceived ideas of what a successful career is. Therefore, despite being middle class, a limited concept of what careers truly are, not just in terms of success, exists.

Further, consensus was established among research participants for the perceived importance of gaining career exposure and experience, as well as the need for adolescent participants to thoroughly plan, explore and research each potential career option in order to make an informed career decision. While parents encouraged the seizing of such opportunities by adolescents as a means of being able to empower themselves by vicariously living through the sons’ experiences, the adolescent participants’ desire to work overseas may
be suggestive of the exposure to and adoption of westernised lifestyles in which global travelling, relocating and international exposure forms a part.

In conclusion, the implementation of the MSCI (Adolescent) booklets, in combination with interviews drawing on an IPA approach, was a successful process resulting in the capturing of thick, rich, descriptive data. In particular, the adoption of a storied approach to careers was an effective method of eliciting pertinent themes and influences impacting on South African Black male adolescents’ career development. Further, the results of the study prompted numerous implications for future research which are discussed in detail below. In the following section, the limitations of the present study are examined.

Limitations of Research

A number of limitations were identified by the researcher in the present study. The first limitation lay in the manner in which the researcher relied on the answers recorded in participants’ MSCI (adolescent) booklets during individual interviews. Such booklets were an effective facilitator’s tool and generated a sound foundation from which to begin the semi-structured interview process. However, in retrospect it is felt that the researcher should have taken a more in-depth interview approach, as too little flexibility by the researcher may potentially have limited the richness of the data collected. Therefore, the researcher’s interview style, rather than the actual MSCI (adolescent) booklets, is seen as a limitation of the study.

Secondly, it is felt that the inclusion of participant validation (by means of conducting follow-up interviews with research participants) may have led to thicker, richer themes of a stronger validity. Such a statement is made as participant validation would have allowed participants the opportunity to respond to and offer perceived reasons for the emerging research themes, rather than having to place a considerable amount of reliance on the interactive interpretation of interview data by the researcher. However, the decision not to
conducted follow-up interviews was made in accordance with the latest IPA guidelines of Smith et al (2009) who advocate that this previously established guideline is no longer a necessary component of IPA.

Thirdly, the interactive interpretation of interview transcripts by the White South African researcher highlights a further research limitation, as the research findings were partly informed by the researcher’s own career development experiences, race, history as an adolescent and perceived understanding of the social and societal-environmental contexts in South Africa. To address this shortcoming, an individual who has obtained a masters degree in research psychology, and who is familiar with IPA research in particular, was utilised as an independent coder to verify the valence of established superordinate and subordinate themes, as well as to add to the validity of the data analysis process.

Further, interpretations cannot fully be regarded as objective truths and therefore the researcher must remain reflexive about his impact not only during the interview process but also with regard to the interpretation of findings. During the interview process, the researcher represented a White, tertiary-level educated individual who was seated amongst Black middle class individuals. This may have represented a power imbalance which may have influenced the nature of material which surfaced during the interviews. Resultantly, the participants may have reserved their comments with regard to their lifeworlds and not delved into the deeper significance of such understandings with a researcher who may be perceived as so different and removed from their realities. Further, since the researcher was considered as an outsider to the participants’ lived realities during the interpretive process, the data could only have been interpreted from this external position.

Lastly, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to the entire Black South African adolescent middle class population and this may be perceived as a research limitation. However, it is argued that IPA research provides qualitative, in-depth accounts
that serve to inform and enrich future research. Having considered the limitations of the present research, the researcher will now reflect on the implications of the current study in the following section.

**Implications of the Present Study and Future Research**

As an intern psychologist, the researcher has utilised the MSCI (Adolescent), STF and IPA (which was developed in the field of psychology) as tools to understand the career processes of South African Black middle class adolescents. In so doing, the researcher has been able to see not only the content of the participants’ discussions and views in their context but also has been able to add to it an interpretive edge which is psychologically informed. This partnership has enabled the prompting of a novel understanding of the interpsychic and intrapsychic processes that inform South African Black middle class adolescents’ career-based decisions. The present research has been responsive to international and national calls for research that examines career development holistically and also the process of career development.

This study has qualitatively uncovered subjective views, experiences and expressions of Black South African adolescent career development, revealing systemic influences impacting on their career development which, arguably, may not have been uncovered by more traditional career approaches. While illuminating subjectively perceived career influences, this study also led to the asking of more questions by the researcher which suggests possibilities for future South African career research. Some of the questions that this research raised were: would these findings be consistent with other Black middle class families? Does every Black middle class family see apartheid as a pertinent influence in their career opportunities, career decisions and career paths? Would other research variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, single-headed households and type of school yield different understandings, and if so, where would the differences lie? Are the great
expectations that are placed on the current study’s adolescent participants particular to only these Grade Elevens at this time of their career path, or is it something they endure throughout each step of the process towards becoming working citizens? Would findings be similar among Black female South African adolescents, given that Xhosa males may be culturally advantaged in terms of the promotion of their career development by parents? Such questions need to be addressed by future research, which means that this study has assisted in expanding the scope of the field of career psychology.

The collaborative relationship between the Systems Theory Framework (STF), the MSCI (adolescent) qualitative career assessment measure, and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) within this study has only breached the surface of potential for this effective partnership in South African career research. Therefore, similarly to the call of Kuit (2006), the alliance between these resources should now be further explored in a greater diversity of social, cultural and environmental contexts, as well as among adolescents of varying gender, socioeconomic backgrounds and ages.

With the assistance of integrating the Systems Theory Framework (STF) with pragmatic career assessment measures such as the MSCI, a hope exists for career research to continue to uncover and explore adolescent career findings which are arguably unobtainable via traditional quantitative research methods within the South African context. The researcher therefore supports Watson and McMahon (2009) who acknowledged the strength and efficacy of the STF and MSCI within South Africa, as well as providing career resources able to link adolescents’ “life stories with their career choice process, life transitions, and career pathing” (Watson & McMahon, p. 475).

In spite of the abolishment of the apartheid regime almost sixteen years ago, parent participants highlighted the apparent need to continue researching the effects thereof among Black South Africans, as indicated by interview data that illustrated perceived causal
relationships linking the effects of apartheid with the manner in which parent participants raised and influenced the career development of their adolescent sons. Hence, future career research amongst Black South African adolescents cannot yet exclude apartheid as an influential factor on Black adolescent career development, career opportunities and career decisions, despite such adolescents not having lived during the apartheid era.

In conclusion, the combination of a Systems Theory Framework, MSCI (Adolescent) booklets and an IPA approach has effectively uncovered a number of systemic career influences impacting on the career development of South African Black middle class adolescents from both adolescent and parent perspectives. The present study’s original research aims have therefore been achieved. Further the scope of the field of career psychology has been widened by the provision of a platform for future research, as a result of the richness of the research findings.
References


## Correlation of All Participants Responses

### My Present Career Situation

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<th>Mrs Nyathi (Mother)</th>
<th>Mr Nyathi (Father)</th>
<th>Patrick Mafu (Learner)</th>
<th>Mrs Mafu (Mother)</th>
<th>Mr Mafu (Father)</th>
<th>Zuko Dlamini (Learner)</th>
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| A value I hold | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | 8 | 7 |
| My beliefs | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | | 7 | 4 |
| My interests | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | 7 | 4 |
| My abilities | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | 8 | 3 |
| Friendship | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0 |
| My health | X | | | X | X | X | | | | 4 | 3 |
| How I cope | X | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| My disability | | X | | | | | | 1 | 0 |
| My gender | | | X | | X | | | 2 | 1 |
| My age | X | X | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| My culture | | X | X | | | | | 2 | 0 |

### Thinking About People Around Me

| My parents | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 9 | 6 |
| My teachers | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 8 | 6 |
| My youth group leader | X | X | | | X | | X | | X | X | 4 | 3 |
| My friends | X | X | X | | X | | | | | 5 | 4 |
| Visiting speakers at school | X | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0 |
| My family members | X | | X | X | | | | | | 3 | 2 |
| Television | X | X | X | X | | | | | | 4 | 1 |
| Reading | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | 5 | 1 |
| My neighbours | | | | | | | | | | X | 1 | 0 |
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## Thinking About My Past, Present and Future

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Appendix B: Coding of Interview Data

(Extract from Mr Dlamini’s Interview)

ANSWER: (laugh) at the end of the day, because if both parents are there they should play their roles, and if their son fails and then you should not be pointing fingers. Because already the challenges that we have to face…should you have done this better, or should you have approved this far much more better, you know? I mean, it depends on our minds as well, but you don’t have to say this and that and that, but both parties should be working together.

QUESTION: Okay it was also said that the mother should be there for emotional support and the father should be there for disciplining?

ANSWER: (laugh), Ja, well for some people that might be working but I, I don’t really think for us here, is the right way to go. You know as much as I know, our kids are very much more special to their mothers. Things that I really don’t know that they are the people that they easily run to, but we as fathers is specially open to our kids.

QUESTION: Okay

ANSWER: And it should be that particular role that, I am open, you don’t have to sit there with a problem, and they show their mother and if their mother can give some advice or maybe the advice is not really the perfect one or the suitable one and then this will be the mothers.

QUESTION: Okay.

ANSWER: But we should be supporting them emotionally and the other side as well.

QUESTION: Okay. Zuko’s role, what is his role in shaping his career? It sounds like a Comment [P1]: Collaborative parenting

Comment [S2]: Mother as emotional support base, advisor or problem solver?

Comment [P3]: Fathers providing emotional support as well as mothers. Wish for collaborative parenting?
strange question?

**ANSWER:** I think he must also decide from what he wants, okay and take into consideration his abilities and potential and what it takes, you know, in order to make that a success choice in choosing a career and on that studies. Or to go and do some research in the career of his choice, you know, that is one thing that he has done, with our assistance as well.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**ANSWER:** And dedicate his time, most of his time that is that I am preach(ing) time and again to him you know, dedicate your time in your studies. That does not say you don’t have to play or do this and that you know, but most importantly, you have a far better future when you know that you have got what you are aspiring for. And then let’s say academically okay, you achieve, or you get your degree and all those things and then, the so-called life that they pursue at an earlier age or at an earlier stage okay, might be far much more better if one says, here is it, I have done it and then that will open most of, all the doors for them.

**QUESTION:** You said first and foremost they need to decide what they want to do, and you wrote down jobs he considered. Is a lawyer, is that his choice to become a lawyer?

**ANSWER:** (laugh) I will say that is (his) choice, because at one stage we were talking about this choosing the subjects for school and all those things, and then there was this science, mathematics and all the importance of that and other stuff in there and he has stated that he is open to when we understand those subjects. I would say that is his choice, no one forced him or no one said hey, hey, you can’t do that, you know he would really like to be a lawyer.
Appendix C: MSCI (Adolescent) Summative Diagrams

Mr Mafu
Mrs Mafu:
Patrick Mafu:
## Appendix D: Learners Informed Consent Form

### RESEARCHER’S DETAILS

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<td>Contact telephone number</td>
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### A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT

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<td>of the participant</td>
<td>(full names)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address (of participant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by Gary Collett of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

### THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1 Research aims:</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Procedures:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Any Possible Risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Research benefits:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Confidentiality:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Access to findings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation:</td>
<td>YES  NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

Any new information or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared as follows:

My participation is voluntary
My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care / employment / lifestyle

YES

NO

3. THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME/THE PARTICIPANT BY:

(name of relevant person)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and I am in command of this language, or it was satisfactorily translated to me by

(name of translator)

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.

A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:

Signed/confirmed at            on                        2009

Signature of witness:

Full name of witness:

B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

I, [name of interviewer]

declare that:

1. I have explained the information given in this document to [name of patient/participant] and / or his / her representative [name of representative]

This conversation was conducted in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And no translator was used OR this conversation was translated into

(language) by [name of translator]

4. I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant

YES

NO

Signed/confirmed at            on                        2009

Signature of interviewer

Signature of witness:

Full name of witness:

C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT

Dear participant/representative of the participant

Thank you for your/the participant’s participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:
- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study

Kindly contact Gary Collett at telephone number (041) 504 2330
## Appenidix E: Parental Informed Consent Form

### RESEARCHER’S DETAILS

| Title of the research project | Systemic influences on Black South African adolescents’ career development: Adolescent and parental perspectives |
| Reference number | |
| Principal investigator | Gary Collett |
| Address | P.O. Box 77000, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 6031 |
| Contact telephone number | (041) 504 2330 |

### A. DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, the participant and the undersigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, in my capacity as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address (of participant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

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<tbody>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2.6 Access to findings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Voluntary participation / refusal / discontinuation:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **THE INFORMATION ABOVE WAS EXPLAINED TO ME/THE PARTICIPANT BY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(name of relevant person)</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in Afrikaans</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   and I am in command of this language, or it was satisfactorily translated to me by

   | (name of translator) |

   I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered satisfactorily.

4. **No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.**

5. **Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.**

A.2 **I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Signature of witness:

   Full name of witness:

B. **STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I, (name of interviewer)</th>
<th>declare that:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have explained the information given in this document to (name of patient/participant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and / or his / her representative (name of representative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>This conversation was conducted in</th>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

   | 3. And no translator was used OR this conversation was translated into (language) by (name of translator) |

   | 4. I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant YES NO |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2009</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   Signature of interviewer

   Signature of witness:

   Full name of witness:

C. **IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT**

Dear participant/representative of the participant

Thank you for your/the participant’s participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:
- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study

Kindly contact Gary Collett at telephone number (041) 504 2330
Appendix F: Letter to School Principal

Dear ____________

My name is Gary Collett and I am currently conducting career research for my treatise in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in Clinical Psychology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). The title of my research treatise is: Systemic influences on Black South African adolescents’ career development: Adolescent and parental perspectives.

The present study explores the perceptions of systemic influences on adolescent career development from the perspectives of Black middle-class South African Grade 11 learners and their parents. The research will be conceptualised within the Systems Theory Framework of career development and uses its derivative instrument, the My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI Adolescent Version).

The study will require the participation of three Black middle-class South African Grade 11 learners and their parents. Grade 11 learners were specifically chosen as research indicates that this is an exploratory year in which career identity is refined, as well as a year in which action steps are initiated in order to pursue future career goals. To the present researcher’s knowledge, no South African research currently exists regarding the systemic influences on career development from the perspectives of African adolescents and their parents. This study will seek to explore the reasons for this, as well as explore any
possible differences in adolescents’ and their parents’ perspectives on adolescent career development which may exist.

After selecting the participants who most accurately fulfil the research sample criteria, such learners will be provided with a clear description of what the study entails, what is required of them as participants, as well as the ultimate goals of the study. Furthermore, parental consent for such participants will be obtained and, as a part of this process, a request for parental involvement in the study will be made. Participants will be given assurance of confidentiality throughout their participation in the study and informed consent will be established. Furthermore, participants will be made fully aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish. Every effort will be made to ensure that the conducting of interviews and data collection process does not coincide with the learner’s official school times, as well as the parents’ work schedules.

Both the researcher and his supervisors, Professor Mark Watson (NMMU Head of Psychology Department) and Dr. Mary McMahon (The University of Queensland, Australia), believe that such a study will provide valuable insight into a previously unresearched area and will significantly benefit the understanding of career development of Black middle class adolescents in South Africa.

Yours Sincerely

Gary Collett
Psychologist in Training

Professor M.B. Watson
Psychologist and Research Supervisor