



**CAREER INDECISION AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS  
AT AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

**by**

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**at the**

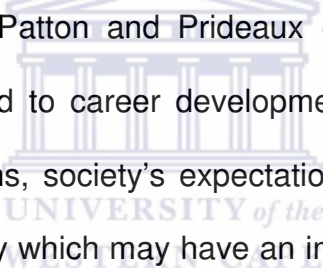
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## ABSTRACT

One of the most important decisions adolescents are confronted with in the transitioning period from high school to tertiary institutions, is making career decisions. Young adults and adolescents may experience high levels of stress when they are expected to make decisions pertaining to a desired career. The stressful period may be too overwhelming for them. As a result it may have adverse implications on the quality of their career choice. The applicability of career indecision amongst undergraduate university students is considered an inability to choose a university major or occupation (Brogan & Hiebert, 2006).



According to Creed, Patton and Prideaux (2006), career indecision is linked to issues related to career development and problems in making career related decisions, society's expectations and perceptions, as well as the role of the family which may have an impact on the student's ability to make career choices. In a study conducted by Creed and Patton (2003) it was revealed that age, gender and career indecision were predictors of career maturity knowledge. Joordan, Smithard and Burger (2009) postulate that career indecision influences career related thoughts and career decisions and plays an important role in the way individuals formulate career goals. Gordon and Meyer (2002) are of the view that it is not atypical for individuals to experience a certain level of developmental career indecision, this may be resultant to not having adequate experience and sufficient knowledge pertaining to the world of work. Developmental career indecision amongst students is viewed as a wholesome state which

may ultimately prompt the student to explore careers and set goals (Feldt, 2010).

Brown, Brooks and Associates (1996), delineate that a career choice is an act which replicates an individual's motivation. This action compels the individual to work toward their goals and to achieve it. As students venture on attaining their goal (career choice) they are confronted with many challenges, some of which include the transition from secondary school to tertiary level and the adaptation to an academic environment. This emphasizes the importance of career guidance, and that it should not be neglected. Stead and Watson (1999) conducted a study on first year university students in the Western Cape which revealed that students from disadvantaged schools were unable to choose study directions at tertiary level due to negligence of not providing career guidance at school level. Resultant to this, students were not afforded the opportunity to make informed decisions pertaining to career choices. Brown et al. (1996) presume the more informed an individual is about career choices and their abilities, the more likely they are to make career choices as they are more prepared to do so.

The current study aimed to examine career indecision experienced by undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape. The study examined the differences in career indecision based on gender and age, it also examined the relationship between a lack of information and career indecision and lastly access to a career

counsellor and career indecision. A biographical questionnaire and the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) were administered to undergraduate university students. The sample (n = 224) consisted of first, second and third year male and female undergraduate commerce students. The results indicated that there are significant differences in career decision making based on gender and age. In addition, the results revealed that there is a moderate relationship between lack of information and career indecision and findings also indicated a significant relationship between access to a career counsellor and career indecision.

The results of the current study should however, be interpreted with caution as a convenience sampling strategy was utilized thus limiting generalizability to the broader population of students. Furthermore limitations are put forth and the study concludes with recommendations for further research and for academic institutions for consideration.

**KEYWORDS:** Career indecision, undergraduates, types of career indecision, career decision (readiness), career counselling, career guidance, lack of information, factors contributing to career indecision, value in career indecision, Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire

## DECLARATION

I DANé Goliath hereby declare that this mini-thesis: Career Indecision amongst undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape, is my original work. All sources that I have used in the content have been referenced.



Signature: .....

Date: .....

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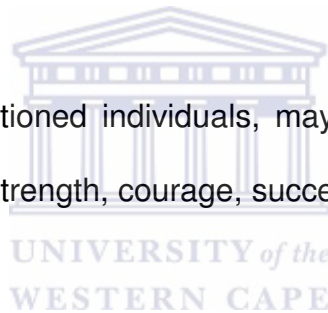
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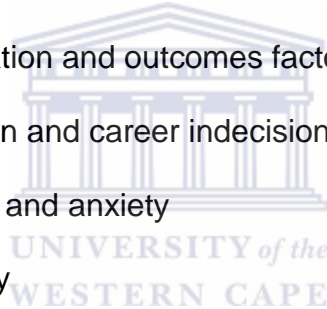


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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years there have been a multitude of publications regarding career indecision. Some focus on the definitions of career indecision and others on the reasons for the various categories of career indecision (Wanberg & Muchinsky, 1992 cited in Germeijs & De Boeck, 2003). However, studies focused on the broad theme of career indecision have failed to accurately define the construct (Gati & Saka, 2001). It has also been identified that some literature utilizes the terms career uncertainty and career indecision interchangeably; it is however important to note that career uncertainty and career indecision are closely related, but they differ in meaning.

Career uncertainty is regarded as a contributing factor to career indecision in students (Jordaan, Smithard & Burger, 2009). Germeijs and De Boeck (2003) concur that career indecision has been, and is still being utilised to identify problems during the career decision - making process. Career indecision is a multidimensional construct which is represented by various forms of indecision. Callahan and Greenhaus (1992) distinguish between four types of career indecision, namely: developmental, chronic, hyper vigilant and vigilant indecision.



Some studies claim that career indecision originally focused on career decision-making problems of students, whereas others reveal that career indecision covers a broad life spectrum due to situations or circumstances that require of people to revise their career decisions over their life span (Lock, 2009). According to Osipow (1999), it would be incorrect to state that the choice of a career only needs to be made during late adolescence and early adulthood. The researcher delineates that revised career plans are required at a range of life stages and each of these periods may lead to potential levels of career indecision that individuals may experience.

The construct career indecision is an issue for high school learners (Nota & Soresi, 2003; Patton & Creed, 2001), university students (Lee, 2005) and learners in their pre-teens. Developmental career theories reveal that the process begins at primary school level, where the learners develop their interests and identify how their abilities relate to the real world. This process continues throughout the individual's lifespan (Creed et al., 2006). According to Osipow (1999), career indecision is a normal developmental experience, and it may vary as a result of situational factors. Mwbale (2004) emphasises that it is imperative to note that the students of today are the employers and employees of the future, therefore proper development and intervention, such as career guidance, should be emphasised due to the fact that not all young people have access to all information pertaining to their future careers.

According to Stead and Watson (1999); Osipow (1983); Sharf (2002); Hayes and Hopson (1977) all cited in Mwbale (2004), career guidance assists individuals to make better decisions regarding their future careers

and other life expectations. Jordaan et al. (2009), posit that career indecision plays an important role in the way individuals perceive their future career prospects and how they approach these prospects. According to Jordaan et al. (2009) career indecision influences career related thoughts and decisions and impacts the manner in which individuals formulate their career goals.

Choosing a career is a vital step individuals take since it has an impact on every area of their lives. According to Gati and Asher (2001), choosing a career is one of the most significant decisions an individual is required to make. A career choice may satisfy an individual's needs, values and interests and may also influence the quality of an individual's life. At some point every individual is confronted with a career choice or even a career change, thus leaving individuals indecisive or undecided.

Choosing a career is a complex process and individuals experience some difficulties when they are required to make a decision, that could be related to a career change or choosing a particular career. Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996) postulate that career decision making difficulties may occur prior to the actual decision making process and during the decision making process. Furthermore, Gati et al. (1996) explain that a lack of readiness is associated with career decision making difficulties experienced prior to the career decision making process. This has revealed that a lack of information, and inconsistent information, contribute to the difficulties experienced during the career decision making process.

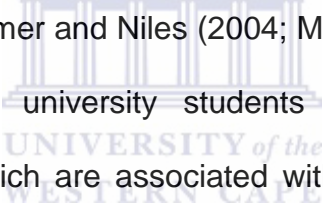
In the context of university students, Brogen and Hiebert (2006) state that career indecision is considered an inability to choose a university major or occupation. First year students are confronted with many challenges which may include adapting to tertiary education and dealing with the transition from high school to university. According to Morgan and Ness (2003), many first year students experience career indecision which is conceptualized as a construct which denotes problems individuals experience while making career decisions. Some students may be less undecided than others, but those who struggle with career indecision are most unlikely to resolve one or more career decision making difficulty.

Talib and Aun (2009) assert that career decisions label students decided or undecided in their career choices, in addition to this, it creates the idea of readiness and career maturity regarding the completion of a career development task. A career decision is described as a developmental phase which individuals pass through as they make career related decisions (Talib & Aun, 2009). Niles and Bowsby (2009) declare that students in higher education need to be competent, possess the necessary skills to make decisions and also have the required skills to make career transitions.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Young adults and adolescents may experience high levels of stress when they are expected to make decisions pertaining to a desired career. This stressful period may be too overwhelming for them. As a result, it may have adverse effects on the quality of their career choice. A study

conducted by Reece (2011) proved that there is a significant relationship between stress and career indecision. Furthermore Reece (2011) postulates that higher levels of career indecision are associated with higher levels of stress. Creed et al. (2006) posit that career indecision is associated with person variables such as age and gender. The findings of Creed and Patton's (2003) study revealed that age, gender and career indecision were predictors of career maturity knowledge. In a study conducted within a South African context by Watson and van Aarde (2006), it was found that career indecision levels of Coloured students indicated that age and gender had an influence on their career decisions and career maturity.



According to Herr, Cramer and Niles (2004; Mubiana, 2009 cited in Talib & Aun, 2009), 50% of university students experience career related problems, some of which are associated with students being undecided about various career options, causing anxiety in first year university students. According to Osipow (1999), career indecision is also linked to issues related to career development, the expectations and perceptions of society, as well as the role of the family all of which may have an impact on the student's ability to make career choices.

Riggenbach (2008 cited in Chaung, Walker & Caine-Bish, 2009) states that students enter college with an understanding of the industry which relates to their chosen major. Gore (2002 cited in Chaung et al., 2009) furthermore postulates that students' intentions to decide upon a profession relate to their chosen majors. Reeve, Nix and Hamm (2003

cited in Johnson, 2007) are of the opinion that when students feel they do not have a definite career choice, they experience lower levels of motivation. In this instance, motivation is defined as the act of participating in something or performing a task, because there is a desire in the individual to do so (Richmond, 1990). Gati et al. (1996) and Tak and Lee (2003 cited in Mylonas, Argyropoulou & Tampouri, 2012), claim that a lack of motivation is one of the leading factors embedded in career indecision among undergraduates.

Jordaan et al. (2009) postulate that career indecision influences career related thoughts and decisions, and it plays an important role in the way individuals formulate career goals. Gordon and Meyer (2002) claim that it is common for individuals to experience a certain level of developmental career indecision. This may be due to not having adequate experience and sufficient knowledge pertaining to the world of work. Developmental career indecision among students is viewed as a wholesome state which may ultimately prompt the student to explore careers and set goals (Feldt, 2010). Brown, Brooks and Associates (1996) view career choice as an act which replicates an individual's motivation. This action compels individuals to work toward their goals and to achieve them. As students venture on attaining their goal (career choice), they are confronted with many challenges, some of which include the transition from secondary school to tertiary level, also adapting to the academic environment. This emphasizes the importance of career guidance.

Mubiana (2010) is of the opinion that it is important to guide students through the decision making process, which has become a central issue in vocational counselling. Stead and Watson (1999) conducted a study on first year university students in the Western Cape, which revealed that students from disadvantaged schools were unable to choose study directions at tertiary level due to absence of career guidance at school level, thus students are not afforded the opportunity to make informed decisions pertaining to career choices.

Brown et al. (1996) presume that the more informed an individual is about career choices and their abilities, the more likely they are to make good career choices as they are better prepared to do so. In addition to this, career knowledge and self knowledge play an important role in choosing a viable career path, as the career decision that students make is critical in determining the outcome of their lives. Mubiana (2010) states that limited learning experiences, levels of career maturity, career and self knowledge influence the career decision making process. The researcher also delineated that career decision making is influenced by the demonstration of individuals' self knowledge and the understanding of their chosen profession.

A study done by Taylor (2007) disclosed that late adolescents who received career guidance counselling, experienced a reduction in their level of difficulty in the career decision making process, as opposed to those who did not attend career guidance counselling. The findings also indicated that a lack of information was the primary area where career

guidance counselling was effective in reducing career decision making difficulties experienced by adolescents. Taylor (2007) is of the opinion that the difficulties experienced by late adolescents, affect their level of career indecision and their ability to make informed career choices as they progress towards entering the world of work.

Based on the above, the aim of this study is to determine whether or not there are differences in decision making based on age and gender, factors contributing to career indecision, assessing whether curriculum advice would assist students with subject choices to determine the relationship between lack of information and career indecision, and to determine how career indecision among university students can be reduced.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To determine the factors that contribute to career indecision amongst undergraduate university students.
- To examine the difference in career indecision based on age amongst undergraduate students.
- To examine the difference in career indecision based on gender amongst undergraduate students.
- To determine whether or not curriculum advice would assist undergraduate students in choosing their modules.

- To determine how career indecision amongst undergraduate university students can be reduced.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

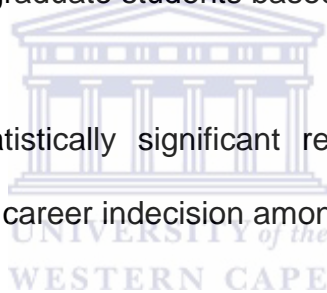
Based on the above the following hypotheses have been formulated.

H<sub>1</sub> There is a statistically significant difference in career indecision amongst undergraduate students based on gender.

H<sub>2</sub> There is a statistically significant difference in career indecision amongst undergraduate students based on age.

H<sub>3</sub> There is a statistically significant relationship between lack of information and career indecision amongst undergraduate students.

H<sub>4</sub> There is a statistically significant relationship between access to career counsellor and career indecision amongst undergraduate students.





## **1.5 DEFINITIONS OF CONSTRUCTS**

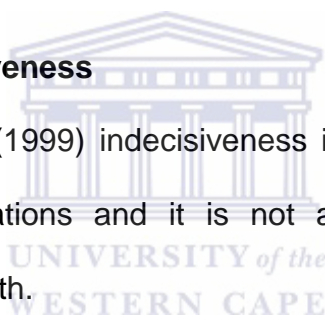
Below follows in brief the definitions of the important constructs that will be used in the current study.

### **1.5.1 Career indecision**

Career indecision is described as problems individuals encounter as they make career decisions, as well as an antecedent that may influence career choices (Esters, 2007). Career indecision among university students, according to Brogen and Hierbet (2006), is the inability to choose an occupation or university major.

### **1.5.2 Career indecisiveness**

According to Osipow (1999) indecisiveness is a trait generalized across decision making situations and it is not an ordinary part of human development and growth.



### **1.5.3 Career decision making**

Career decision making is the process whereby individuals make career and educational decisions (Swanson & D' Achhiardi, 2005).

### **1.5.4 Career knowledge**

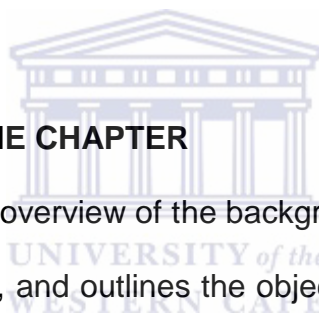
Career knowledge, according to Stead and Watson (1999), relates to the knowledge base individuals have, regarding career alternatives that are available.

### **1.5.5 Career uncertainty**

Career uncertainty is regarded as any factor that may influence individuals to feel uncertain about their future career (Tien, 2005).

### **1.5.6 Career maturity**

According to Savikas (1999) career maturity is defined as an individual's readiness to make career decisions and being able to cope with career development tasks. It also refers to the ability of individuals to make career choices (the extent to which the career choice is realistic and consistent) and being knowledgeable about the requirements for decision making (Hirschi & Lage, 2007).



## **1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the background to the study, delineates the problem statement, and outlines the objectives of the study as well as the hypotheses to be investigated. The chapter concludes with defining the important constructs which are focused on in the study.

## **1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

This mini-thesis comprises of five chapters, each having its unique contents and purpose.

Chapter 2 comprehensively discusses career indecision, the transitioning phase into the university, career indecision, career theories and concepts, the nature of career indecision, the value of career indecision, types of career indecision, factors associated with career indecision, the South

African workforce and career indecision, career uncertainty, the information, valuation and outcomes factors, lack of information and career indecision, career indecision and anxiety, career readiness, career uncertainty, career maturity and the role of career counsellors.

Chapter 3 highlights the research design utilized to execute the research. Specific reference is made to the selection of the sample, data collection methods, measuring instruments and statistical analyses used in the study.

Chapter 4 reports on the results stemming from the analysis of the data obtained.



Chapter 5 discusses the results emanating from the results obtained in the study. Studies are referred to, to support the findings of the current study. Conclusions are made based on the results obtained in the study and integrated with existing literature. Furthermore, practical implications of the research findings are emphasized and recommendations for future research are outlined.

The following chapter provides an overview of career indecision, the chapter discusses the transition from high school to university, several theories, career indecision and career indecisiveness, related variables, perspectives of decision making, value in career indecision, types of career indecision, factors associated with career indecision, 21<sup>st</sup> century

workforce and career indecision, lack of information and career indecision, career indecision and anxiety, career uncertainty, career readiness and career indecision, career maturity and the role of career counsellors.

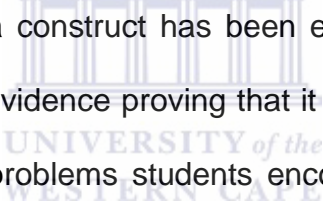


## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Choosing a career path is one of the most important decisions individuals need to make, it is a decision that may impact the quality of an individual's life (Gati, 1998 cited in Hall, 2005) as well as affect the course of their life (Lock, 2009). Gati (1998 cited in Hall, 2005) is of the opinion that a decision pertaining to a career is one of the most significant decisions an individual needs to make due to the fact that a career choice may fulfil one's needs, values and interests.

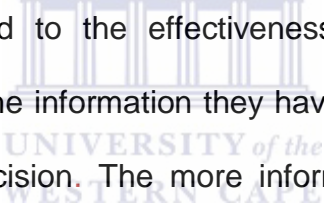


Career indecision as a construct has been extensively studied for many decades and there is evidence proving that it developed over the years. It originally focused on problems students encounter as they make career decisions (Osipow, 1999). However, in more recent years, career indecision has grown to involve decision making over a broad life spectrum due to people needing to revise their plans as well as events that compel them to make adjustments. Lock (2009) posits that in the past, individuals would normally make a single career choice and follow the same career path for years. This is no longer the case, considering environmental changes such as the unstable economic conditions, recessions, and global competition which are some of the reasons that compel organizations to restructure and make necessary changes (Reitman & Schneer, 2003 cited in Lock, 2009). Furthermore, the circumstances under which individuals need to make career decisions

have changed over the years. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work individuals are required to make multiple career related decisions. According to Callanan and Greenhaus (1990 cited in Lock, 2009), individuals are uncertain about their careers with regard to what they want from their careers, what they would like to achieve and what they should do to achieve it. These changes (that is the world of work and economic conditions) require individuals to adapt which ultimately may result in instability and uncertainty (Lock, 2009). In addition to the above, school leavers are faced with issues such as: high rates of unemployment, scarcity of skilled and literate workers and the HIV/AIDS pandemic when they decide to seek employment in the labour market (Lock, 2009). Some school leavers may decide to study at a tertiary institution and may switch from one major career to another because of uncertainty and indecision. According to Lock (2009) the majority of new entrants into the labour market pursue a career where they base their career choice on necessity and being undecided about a career choice thus resulting in career indecision.

In South Africa it is apparent that there is a high unemployment rate, this may have an effect on future generations because the present children/adolescents and students are the nation's potential employers and employees (Mbwale, 2004). In this instance unemployment does not only have an effect on the current economy but also on the future socio economic issues as well as the background of career aspirations of children/adolescents.

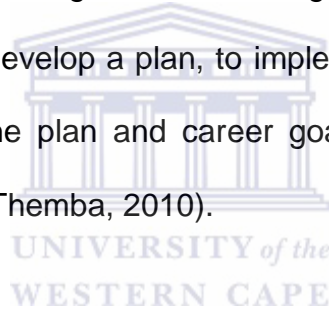
In the early development years of children the major influences on their idea of a particular career or field of interest comes from their families. The influence of families highlighted by research reveals that children of unemployed parents have less career aspirations, because they may not have been exposed to career experiences compared to children of employed parents. This may lead to the children having less career aspirations than those who have parents who are employed (Mbwale, 2004). As the children grow and mature, they may begin to visualize careers that may seem interesting and as they become adolescents they may gather more information about careers from various sources such as teachers, career counsellors, relatives and friends.



The value with regard to the effectiveness of an individual's career decision depends on the information they have access to at the time they need to make the decision. The more information individuals have the more informed decisions they will be able to make. It is understood that at an early age children are aware that they need to make a career choice. However, the awareness of the need to make a decision is not sufficient; adolescents need to be able to make a conscious career choice. Mbwale (2004) explains that a conscious choice relates to the adolescent having gathered sufficient and accurate information regarding their abilities, capabilities, strengths, weaknesses and information about themselves (Mbwale, 2004).

Phillip and Jome (2005 cited in Themba, 2010) state that there are various models that elucidate the career decision making, the models of decision

making are either models which provide descriptions of the career decision making process, or the models are prescriptive guidelines. An approach of decision making that is prominently used involves being cognizant of objectives, obtaining information and gathering and assessing alternatives before making career related choices (Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008 cited in Themba, 2010). This decision making approach is a process that requires individuals to be aware of careers that match their abilities and values. Themba (2010) stated that individuals need decision making skills which will assist them to make appropriate career related decisions. The decision making skills identified include, the ability to gather information pertaining to self knowledge, employment opportunities, career goals, how to develop a plan, to implement a plan of action and to obtain feedback on the plan and career goals (Coetzee & Roythorne - Jacobs, 2007 cited in Themba, 2010).



Choosing a career is a vital step individuals take, as it has an impact on every area of their lives. According to Gati and Asher (2001), deciding on a career is one of the most significant decisions an individual is required to make. Individuals prepare for work in their early life stages and the larger part of their life they will spend doing the work up to the last part of their lives where they go on retirement. A career choice may satisfy individuals' needs, values and interest and influence the quality of their lives. Every individual at some stage is confronted with a career choice or even a change of direction in their career, resultant to this, deciding between various career related choices can leave individuals undecided or indecisive. Some literature utilizes the terms "career uncertainty" and



“career indecision” interchangeably however, career uncertainty and career indecision are closely related, but they differ in meaning. Career uncertainty is regarded as a contributory variable which ultimately leads to career indecision experienced amongst students (Jordaan et al., 2009).

Choosing a career path in essence is a career decision-making process. Zunker (1994 cited in Rowland, 2004) postulates that career decision making is a process whereby an individual selects an occupation. Creed et al. (2006) postulate that career decision making is an important decision which young people need to make. According to the researchers, when young people are required to make career related decisions, they usually experience career indecision, thus the researchers are of the opinion that career indecision is a normal response when making career choices. Brown et al. (1996) define career decision-making as “the thought processes by which an individual integrates self-knowledge and occupational knowledge to arrive at an occupational choice” (p. 426).

Career indecision plays an important role in the way individuals perceive and approach their future career prospects. Jordaan et al. (2009) identified that career indecision influences career related thoughts and decisions and it plays an important role in the way individuals formulate career goals. Riggerbach (2008, cited in Chaung, Walker & Caine-Bish, 2009) posits that students enter college understanding the connection between their chosen major and industry, however the researcher claims that it is the student’s values that determines their career choice. Gore (2002 cited

in Chaung et al., 2009) indicated that students' intentions to decide upon an occupation are associated with their chosen majors.

Career indecision amongst university students can be explained as the "inability to select a university major or occupation" (Brogen & Hiebert, 2006, p. 58). Chaung et al. (2009) state that when students enrol for a programme at a university, their academic major influences their career choice and career planning. The researcher believes that students are more committed to a career goal if their academic majors are profession orientated.

Prior to the 1960's, one of the most frequent problems students discussed with counsellors, was career indecision and at the time there was no standardized method to assess the nature as well as the degree of career indecision (Osipow, 1999). Taylor (2007) posits that career counsellors can assist students in the decision making process by providing information to students.

Brown et al. (1996) presume the more informed an individual is about career choices and their abilities, the more likely they are to make career choices, as they are better prepared to do so. Career indecision is a construct that experts in career guidance counselling are interested in. Osipow (1999) explains that career indecision is seen as a developmental phase individuals pass through prior to reaching a decision. Thus career indecision is a state that comes and goes over time as a decision is made,

implemented and leads to a new decision being reached, which ultimately introduces temporary indecision and the process begins again.

Additionally, Gordon and Meyer (2002) postulate that it is not atypical for individuals to experience a certain level of developmental career indecision, this may be the result of not having adequate experience and sufficient knowledge pertaining to the world of work. Developmental career indecision amongst students is viewed as a wholesome state which may ultimately prompt the student to explore careers and set goals (Feldt, 2010).

Based on the above, the purpose of this research study is to assess career indecision experienced amongst undergraduate students at an academic institution. Furthermore, factors related to career indecision, the relationship between career indecision and age and gender, lack of information and access to career counselling will also be investigated. The research will thus be conducted to ascertain the different variables affecting undergraduate students and the difficulties they may experience when making career related choices.

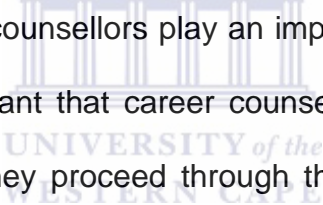
## **2.2 TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY**

The transition from high school to university requires of adolescents to make important decisions. In order for them to reach a decision, they go through a process that eventually leads them to reach a final outcome. They need to make important decisions such as a career choice, what career path to follow and which institution to apply to, consequently the

decision making process can be overwhelming for the adolescent. At times students and employees may experience a transition which may take place for various reasons (Gordon, 2000 cited in Hall, 2005). “Transitions can be career changes, a new job, family changes, circumstances of life, or something as simple as a change in degree or major” stated by (Hall 2005, p. 9).

School leavers are exposed to a globalized society with a broad array of options such as various career choices and tertiary institutions. The variety of options may be challenging for the adolescents in terms of making an informed decision pertaining to their future career and tertiary education. This experience which requires of adolescents to narrow down on the many options they are confronted with can lead to career indecision. Creed, Prideaux and Patton (2005) posit that career indecision is associated with anxiety, depression, lower life satisfaction, lower identity achievement and maladjustment. In addition to this, there is cognizance that adolescents still experience the normal daily pressures of life, coupled with making a decision that may impact the rest of their lives. Often at times, the challenge for the student is a lack of self knowledge and an understanding of a career they would like to pursue. Smith (2001 cited in Chung et al., 2009) postulates that it is important for students to be prepared for the workplace, not only with the education they receive at university but also with appropriate career related assistance and guidance.

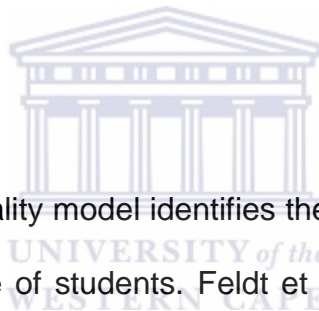
According to Hughes and Harp (2004), there is a wide variety of career guidance interventions available to assist adolescents as they go through the process of making a career decision. According to Brogen and Hiebert (2006), career counselling for adolescents is changing as the expectations of these individuals are changing, also educational and career opportunities are simultaneously moving in different directions. According to Patton (2005) it is apparent that students' transitioning from high school to tertiary study may have unrealistic aspirations, and counsellors should assist students in guarding against adopting an inflexible approach to their career decision making and inform them about the potential shortfalls of unrealistically high hopes and expectations.



In light of this, career counsellors play an important role in the transition period and it is important that career counsellors understand the issues their clients face as they proceed through the transitioning period (Hall, 2005). Additionally, the pivotal role of counsellors is to assist individuals to deal with the level of career indecision they experience (Osipow, 1999). Counsellors have the ability to help individuals understand the reasons why they may be experiencing career indecision and what the potential causes of their indecisions may be. Furthermore, Hall (2005) posits that it is important for counsellors to understand the challenges their clients face as they experience the transitional phase. The researcher further delineates that, as individuals are guided through the counselling process, the counsellors take the clients through an exploration process. The exploration process is divided into four categories, namely: self

knowledge, educational knowledge, occupational knowledge and decision-making knowledge.

In a study conducted by Feldt, Ferry, Bullock, Camarotti-Carvalho, Collingwood, Eilers, Meyer and Nurre (2010) it is highlighted that students may enter tertiary institutions academically prepared, with intellectual abilities that will assist them to perform academically well. The authors additionally highlighted that, how well the first year students adapt to their first year, depends on their personality profile, career planning and career choice. The student's personality influences how well he or she meets the demands of the adaptation and transition from school to college in their first year.



The five-factor personality model identifies the importance of personality in the college experience of students. Feldt et al. (2010) claim that the five factor model holds promise for understanding the role of personality in the transitioning period of first year students. The researchers further purport that the transitioning period requires of the students to adapt to new demands, which includes the following, inter alia, coping and problem solving, attention to detail, planning and suppression of completing of task. Therefore it is important to note that the transition period from high school to a tertiary institution can be a challenging time for adolescents, they need to make important future career related decisions, as well as cope with the daily pressures of life.

## 2.3 CAREER INDECISION

Career indecision is denoted as the difficulties individuals experience when they are required to make a career related decision. At times individuals are required to make decisions which may be related to a career change or choosing a particular career. This decision making process may be a complex situation as certain individuals may experience some challenges when they are required to make a decision. The construct career indecision has and still is used to denote problems during the career decision making process. According to Wanberg and Muchinsky (1992 cited in Germeijs & Boeck, 2001), certain studies have focused on the definitions and reasons of the various categories of career indecision, thus it is evident that career indecision is a construct that has been explored for many years. However, Tinsley (1992 cited in Germeijs & Boeck, 2001) states that even though there has been focus on the construct, indecision remains a theoretical construct about which relatively little is known.

Zimmerman and Kontosh (2006) found that many career development studies have described career indecision as an inability to make career related decisions and linked it to the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes of an individual. In addition to this, Foaad (1994) delineates career indecision with reference to problems relating to career development, specifically problems relating to career decision making. Esters (2007) describes career indecision as problems individuals may encounter as they make a career decision, as well as an antecedent that may influence career choices. In the context of career indecision among

university students, Brogen and Hierbet (2006) contend that career indecision is considered to be an inability to choose a university major subject or career.

Morgan and Ness (2003) purport that career indecision is described as a state which comes and goes over time as a decision is made, when it is implemented, becomes outdated and eventually leads to the need to make a new choice, thus producing a temporary state of indecision. The researchers further postulate that career indecision may be seen as a normal state, some individuals who experience career indecision may be anxious or uncomfortable whereas others may not experience indecision in the same way. According to the researchers, it is imperative to note that individuals will experience different levels of career indecision depending on factors such as relevant information (career related information), career readiness and self-efficacy. In addition to this, career indecision could be seen as a process of development which can motivate individuals to explore different career options, thus allowing them an opportunity to engage in goal-directed behaviours. According to Van Reenen (2010) career exploration is a process in which the student collects and analyses career related information which would enable the student to make optimal career related decisions thus reducing career indecision.

## **2.4 CAREER THEORIES AND CONCEPTS**

Theory is defined as the basic and fundamental knowledge of a particular field. Therefore, theory in career development is explained as a guide in counselling. Career theories have been used to help individuals in career



guidance and to assist them in making more informed career related decisions (Sharf, 1996 cited in Van Reenen, 2010).

To provide a context a few career theories will be explored.

#### **2.4.1 CAREER CHOICE THEORIES**

Hewer (1963) claims that career choice theories are related to a three-way classification of personality theories, namely trait, structural, and adjustment. Writings on the developmental aspects of vocational choice call attention to an important dimension of the choice process.

##### **2.4.1.1 DECISION MAKING DETERMINANTS**

Nelson and Quick (2006 as cited in Fakir, 2010) state there are generic components that affect an individual's career choice, these components include special abilities, race, gender and physical capabilities. There are environmental factors such as social, cultural, political and economic factors which also play a major role in influencing career choice. In addition to this, it was also found that learning experiences may have an impact on career choice.

#### **2.4.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES**

Career development theories assist in making sense of an individual's experiences. Van Reenen (2010) explains that the rationalized set of assumptions would allow individuals to understand the past and predict the future. In essence career theories provide people with career guidance to make more informed career decisions for optimal satisfaction. Below follows a brief discussion of the major career development theories.

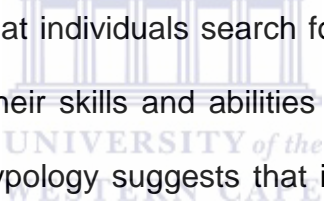
### **2.4.2.1 HOLLAND'S CAREER TYPOLOGY THEORY**

The theory of Holland has guided career interest assessment and his work is well known for the person–environment fit theories. This theory was established to help understand career interest and environment that is used in career counselling and guidance (Porfeli, 2010). Vocational psychology has placed consistent emphasis on the interaction between an individual's personal trait and broader environment. Vocational guidance suggests career decision making is guided by a process called “true reasoning” wherein individuals select a career amongst alternatives in their environment on the basis of correspondence to their ability and interest (Parsons, 1909). Holland popularized this but still maintained the person-environment fit by proposing a model that comprises of six core interests and six corresponding vocational environments. Holland's central assertion is that a person and academic-vocational environment can be categorized according to a six-category classification scheme identified as the six career environments or the occupational personality types. The six categories are: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. The basic assumption of Holland's work according to Porfeli (2010) stipulates that:

- Individuals can be categorized into six typologies and there are six career environments (RIASEC).
- Individuals search for environments that afford them the opportunity to apply their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and take on agreeable roles and problems.

- Behaviour is determined by the interaction between personality and environment.

Trait vocational researchers have attempted to identify vocational interest traits that can account for individual differences in choice of career and adjustment, for example, a realistic person will choose an occupation in a realistic environment. When there is a match between an individual's personality and occupation high levels of satisfaction and low levels of turnover are experienced. A realistic person, for instance, in a social job, is considered incongruent, thus it is highly likely that this individual will not experience satisfaction which does not reduce turnover (Porfeli, 2010).



Corkin (2008) posits that individuals search for work environments where they are able to use their skills and abilities furthermore, the researcher states that Holland's typology suggests that individual's personalities are expressed through their occupational interest (see Table 2.1 on the following page).

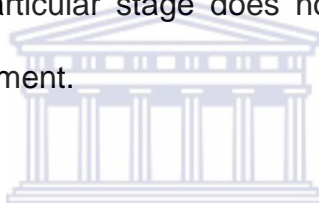
**Table 2.1: Holland's Career Typology**

<b>Personality</b>	<b>Classification of Characteristics</b>
Realistic	Includes individuals with mechanical or athletic abilities or both. They prefer to work with machines or tools, or prefer to work in nature. Typified in occupations such as carpentry and fire fighting.
Investigative	Includes individuals who enjoy observing, analysing and solving problems, or learning in general. Typified in occupations such as computer programmers or scholars in general.
Artistic	Includes creative individuals, who have intuitive abilities, or like to work in an unstructured environment in which they can use their creativity. Typified in careers such as dance and creative writing.
Social	Includes people who like to work with others, essentially to provide information, or apply the skills of healing. Typified in occupations such as teaching
Enterprising	Includes people who like to work with people specifically in a management aspect, or in a position to convince others to meet organizational goals, typified in careers such as management and sales or political strategy.
Conventional	Includes people who like to work with data, they have clerical or numerical abilities and are detail orientated, they also work independently in accordance to others instructions.

Source: Corkin (2008) and Holland (1997)

#### **2.4.2.2 SUPER'S THEORY**

Most developmental stage theories posit that irreversible changes follow one another in a rigid sequence that is linked to chronological age (Smart & Peterson, 1997). Tien (2005) states Super's theory of career development focused on the changes that people experience as they mature. Smart and Peterson (1997) state Super's model is unique among the many career development theories in that it claims that the stages bear no invariant relationship to age as well as that the psychological changes achieved by successfully passing through a particular stage do not necessarily remain permanent. It is one of Super's predictions that the passage through a particular stage does not need to be permanent to define optimal development.



Zunker (2001) presented that Super had five life and career development stages namely: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Table 2.2 on the following page represents the career development stages, age and characteristics.

**Table 2.2: Super's five life and development stages**

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Growth	0-14	Development of self-concept, attitudes and general world of work.
Exploration	15-24	Tentative choice and skill development
Establishment	25-44	Entry level skill building and stabilizing through work experience
Maintenance	45-64	Adjustment process to improve position
Decline	65+	Reduced output and retirement.

Source: Zunker (2001 cited in Van Reenen, 2010).

Super established that “career patterns are determined by socio economic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which individuals are exposed” (Zunker, 2001 as cited in Van Reenen, 2010, p. 25). An invaluable contribution that Super made in career development theory is the notion of self-concept. Tien (2005) states an individual's self concept changes and develops throughout life due to

one's life experience. Zunker (2001, p. 30) further advocates "vocational self- concept develops through physical and mental growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment, and general experiences."

## **2.5 CAREER INDECISION AND CAREER INDECISIVENESS**

Gemeijs and De Boeck (2002) state indecisiveness and indecision are important issues and found a clear distinction between the two constructs from a joint exploratory factor analysis of the indecisiveness scale and a career indecision scale. Geimjs and De Boeck (2002) further found Indecision and Indecisiveness need to be Differentiated from Specific types of indecision, such as career indecision. Osipow (1999) is of the opinion that little is done to differentiate between indecision and indecisiveness. In the study conducted by Gemijs and De Boeck (2002) it was found that career indecision correlates with specific indecision and the researcher also highlights the inter-correlation between different kinds of specific indecisions.

According to Germeijs and De Boeck (2002), indecision which relates to career indecision, does not necessarily imply that an individual has a problem when making decisions in other situations. As opposed to indecision, indecisiveness generalizes across decision making situations (Osipow,1999). Career indecision is seen as a developmental phase through which individuals pass when they are required to make decisions, it is regarded as a normal state in human development. Conversely, indecisiveness is a different process and it is not an ordinary part of

human development and growth, instead it is a trait which generalizes across situations demanding a decision (Osipow, 1999).

Osipow (1999) highlights that if an individual regularly experiences difficulty when making career related decision or other general decisions where closure is not reached to apply appropriate behaviour, it is then deduced that the person is indecisive. Thus, an indecisive person may be undecided at many decision making points during their life and they can be undecided without being indecisive.

It was found that the distinction between career indecision and indecisiveness is recognized as useful and it is important for career counsellors (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2002). The researchers further stated that career indecision can be remedied through information relating to careers and that of the individual or through standard career interventions. However, indecisiveness would need a more intense intervention which will pay attention to personality antecedents of the decision problem. The reason why attention should be given to personality antecedents is based on the findings of Salomone (1982, cited in Germeijs & De Boeck, 2002) who found that indecisive people are most likely to have personality traits, such as low self confidence, low self esteem, helplessness and frustration. Therefore the background of an individual, specifically pertaining to personality traits may be a core reason why individuals experience indecisiveness.



It was established that as students transition to university, they may experience career indecision or they may be indecisive. The need arises for guidance and support in selecting a career and an academic major subject (Brogen & Hiebert, 2006). Osipow (1999, cited in Van Reenen 2010) supports this view by stating that an intense need arises for career planning and guidance amongst high school and university students. Universities should offer interventions such as career counselling to students. Beerlall (1997 cited in Van Reenen, 2010) states that career development programmes should be compulsory in the curriculum of the university and that all first year students should be afforded the privilege of professional assistance through career counselling before the start of the academic year. Thus, it becomes apparent that career counselling is important and researchers have identified that individuals would benefit from career counselling provided counselling is specific to the needs of the individual (Gordan & Meyer, 2002).

There are consistent findings that reveal career counselling is moderately to highly effective. Several studies show that individual and group counselling sessions are the most effective methods of giving assistance to individuals (Whiston, 2003).

Research has found that career indecision is a developmental problem individuals experience that may be due to a lack of information pertaining to knowledge of the self and the world of work. Fakir (2010) states that career counsellors can assist individuals with obtaining information regarding the world of work and certain careers. Career counsellors can

assist individuals who experience career indecision to gather information about themselves as well as information about the world of work and guide them through the process of career management.

## **2.6 NATURE OF CAREER INDECISION AND RELATED VARIABLES**

Feldman (2003) identified two related elements namely, cognitive and affective elements which are both theorised with career indecision. These elements are used by counselling psychologists and researchers to assist the youth with more effective career interventions. Career counsellors and researches have been researching factors and facets of career indecision and they have discovered that adolescents experience difficulty when they need to make career related decisions. Lock (2009) is of the opinion that many researchers over emphasized the cognitive elements and neglected the affective elements, however, most studies essentially include both elements in their conceptualization.

### **2.6.1 COGNITIVE ELEMENTS**

Cognitive factors are considered fundamental in career decidedness as well as to career indecision (Ackerman & Gross, 2006; Amir & Gati, 2006; Campagna & Curtis, 2007; De Bruin & Bernard-Phera, 2002 all cited in Van Reenen, 2010). It has been identified that some cognitive factors simplify career decidedness while other cognitive factors are considered a barrier related to career choice clarity. According to Feldman (2003 cited in Feldman, 2009), cognitive components include factors such as lack of career goals, lack of information with regard to the environment and a lack of knowledge pertaining to the fluctuations taking place in the

employment market. Furthermore, cognitive factors that demonstrate a relationship to career indecision are low problem solving confidence (Luzzo, 1999; Morgan & Ness, 2003; Patton, 2005; Rogers, 2010), external appraisals of control and greater self appraised pressure and barriers. It was also found that career indecision has demonstrated a significant relationship to career thinking such as greater self defeating beliefs, irrational thinking, poor career beliefs and lower career decision making self-efficacy beliefs. However, cognitive factors that have been found to relate to career decidedness include positive self talk (Tien, 2005), problem solving abilities (Rogers, 2010), lower self appraised pressure and barriers (Luzzo, 1999; Osipow & Gati, 1998; Tien, 2005; McWhirter, 2001 all cited in Van Reenen, 2010).

### **2.6.2 AFFECTIVE ELEMENTS**

Affective elements of career indecision include factors such as uncertainty, feelings of lack of control, stress and frustration because of the individual's long term career goals and aspirations, and the possibility that individuals may regret the outcome. All of these may elicit emotions such as stress, fear and confusion during the decision making process (Elyadi, 2006). There are many career related factors as well as career barriers that are linked to career indecision, the factors and career barriers play a significant role in the decision making process.

Career barriers are described as any factor that may frustrate the achievement of career goals. The barriers that have been identified by Creed, Patton and Bartrum (2004) are viewed as either internal to an

individual which includes lack of confidence or low motivation, external to the individual includes lack of access to educational institutions, poverty or both. Creed et al. (2004) contend that career barriers could be interactional whereby individuals may experience both internal conflicts and external frustrations. Students experience a range of career barriers which include ethnic and gender discrimination, financial problems, family attitudes, lack of ability and lack of educational opportunities. The researchers further state that once individuals become aware of their career barriers they may compromise their career goals.

Luzzo (1993 cited in Creed et al., 2004) posits that as career barriers are recognized it may affect an individual's confidence, and as a result this may lead to compromising other career related variables. Furthermore, findings from their research revealed that the interaction between the internal and external career barriers may directly influence career related variables, inter alia, include career decision making, self efficacy, career maturity attitudes, vocational identity and decision making styles, state and trait anxiety and problem solving confidence. According to Creed et al. (2004), the recognition of career barriers should not only be viewed as negative because it may lead to career indecision but it should be considered as challenging and not defeating.

When addressing the nature of career indecision it is imperative to examine the construct from a consequentialist and nonconsequentialist perspective. The nonconsequentialist perspective serves as the basis of

indecisiveness. The following section will briefly discuss these perspectives.

### **2.6.3 CONSEQUENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE ON DECISION MAKING**

The consequentialist perspective describes how individuals make decisions based on the probability of the consequences of each choice. Elaydi (2006) describes it as an analytical process whereby individuals make decisions based on expected outcomes and probabilities of choice. This perspective highlights that individuals will consider the expected outcomes and try to predict the probabilities of all the alternatives.

According to Loewenstein et al. (2001 cited in Lock, 2007), the consequentialist perspective is supported by the expected utility theory, which purports that the decision making process is based on expected outcomes and subjective probabilities of choice. Furthermore, the researcher delineates that the utility theory contends that individuals have a strong sense of internal and logical stability which reflects their beliefs and preferences, this essentially allows individuals to make a correct choice. With this in mind, the consequentialist perspective argues that the emotions individuals may experience during the decision-making process are considered irrelevant. However, it is understood that it does not propose that emotions do not exist, but rather that emotions occur after a decision has been made and not during the decision-making process (Loewenstein et al., 2001 cited in Lock, 2009). It is understood that the consequentialist perspective emphasizes that decision making is a rational

process where emotions are not considered significant in the decision making process (Elaydi, 2006 cited in Lock, 2009).

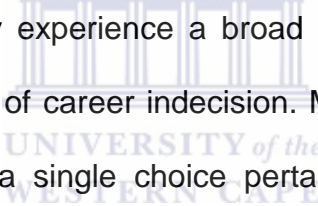
#### **2.6.4 NON-CONSEQUENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE ON DECISION MAKING**

According to Baron (1994 cited in Lock, 2009), the non-consequentialist perspective contends that emotions are embedded in the decision making process and the impact emotions have on decision making. The non-consequentialist perspective on decision making suggests that individuals make decisions based on how they feel and in terms of their emotional responses. Lock (2009) claims that this perspective suggests that decision making is influenced by both anticipated and experienced emotions.

A study done by Loewenstein et al. (2001) highlights three distinctive arguments. Firstly, it suggests that the effect of potential consequences caused by personal or indirect exposure has an impact on the way emotions are experienced during the decision-making process. Secondly, it highlights that cognitive evaluations lead to affective responses (uncertainty, feelings of lack of control, stress and frustration) which may impact decisions and choice preference. Lastly, the model contends that feelings may occur without the support of cognitive elements and that affective responses can combine cognitive evaluations and behaviour. Thus, an individual's emotions can take over before any cognitive processes (Lock, 2009). The nonconsequentialist perspective considers how emotions such as fear and stress influence decision making (Elaydi, 2006 cited in Lock, 2009).

## 2.7 VALUE IN CAREER INDECISION

There are many factors that could influence or be associated with career indecision, whether it is highly experienced young adults contemplating a career move or tertiary level students not being able to select a career or academic major. Literature often hypothesizes how many factors influence individuals and how the factors relate to elevate career indecision levels amongst individuals. However, there is value in career indecision and this should not be avoided. As Hall (2005) posits that indecision is normal, it may allow an individual to do more research, consider an alternative career path more carefully and it also allows the individual to think about the decision that needs to be made.



Some individuals may experience a broad array of interests, thus they may experience levels of career indecision. Many experts advocated that individuals adhere to a single choice pertaining to a career, however, some individuals may have multiple career interests and this should not be considered a problem (Hall, 2005). A boundaryless career encourages individuals to consider other jobs in various functions, multiple organizations and other fields. Hall (2005) is of the opinion that “rigid career roles can stifle and dead end a career” (p.15).

With the rapid transitions that are taking place and the world of work and becoming globalized with developments and improvements to careers, the changes definitely have implications on the traditional order and structure of careers. According to Moore (2003), a boundaryless career allows for individual growth and development. When individuals feel as though they

have more than one career interest, they could explore their interests and equip themselves. Resultant to the varying career interests they may have an advantage above others whereby they are able to adapt to the flexible and multi skilled labour market. In the new trend of work seen as the boundaryless career, it becomes pivotal to be multi-talented and to have more skills and not just settle as a specialist in a certain field.

Peterson and Gonzalez (2005) state that career indecision is normal and the career decision making process should include all considerations for those things that are uncertain. When making a career decision an individual should weigh up all the positives and negatives for career alternatives. Being undecided is acceptable as it encourages the individual to do further research and to pay attention to other aspects related to the job. However, this may lead to psychological stress or irrational beliefs (Peterson & Gonzalez, 2005). Sometimes a career compromise is necessary so that the individual may be able to understand what is desirable and attainable (Gati, 1998 cited in Hall, 2005). A career choice may fulfil individuals' needs, values and interests and influence their quality of life. Campagna and Curtis (2007) propose that a career choice is one of the most important aspects of an individual's development and personal happiness.

Hall (2005) states that life is a learning experience and sometimes individuals discover that their first career choice is not the best choice. Through this process, individuals have the opportunity to refine their interest, gain experience and learn more about themselves. Several



researchers postulate that career indecision is a factor of the career decision making process. The process of decision making as researchers put forward is a process that could be looked at as a developmental process for individuals (Osipow, 1999). As individuals go through the process of decision making preferably with the guidance of a professional career counsellor, they will have exposure to gathering information of one self and explore career alternatives (Mbwale, 2004).

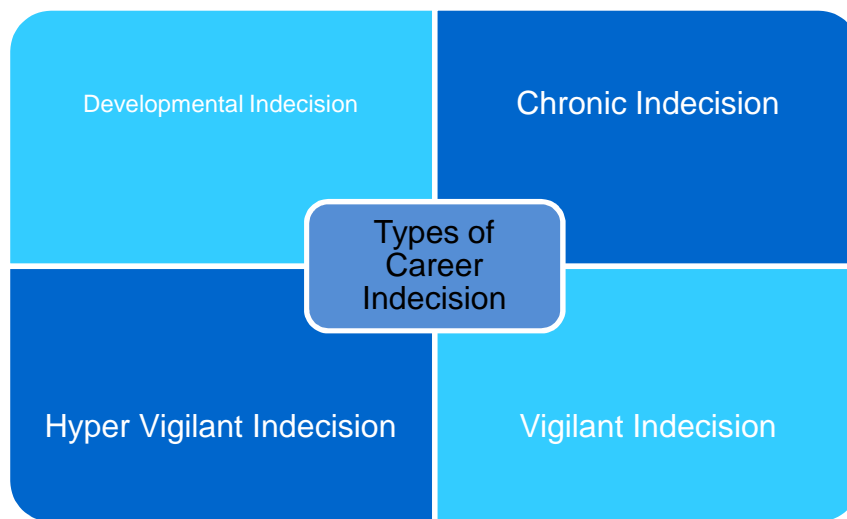
The process of gathering information about career alternatives is known as career exploration. Career exploration is described as self evaluation and external activities that provide individuals with information to progress in the selection of, entry into and the adjustment to an occupation (Morgan & Ness, 2003). The purpose of career exploration is to collect and analyse career related information to enable the individual to make effective career related decisions and reduce career indecision. The term career indecision is focused on and attention is given to the negative societal connotations of being undecided (Beerlall, 1997) and because of the negative description of the career decision making process that is implied. Some researchers who have studied the construct of indecision have termed it “developmental indecision”.

## **2.8 TYPES OF CAREER INDECISION**

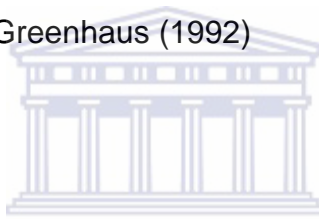
Career indecision is viewed as a multidirectional construct that comprises of different types of career indecision. Callanan and Greenhaus (1992) differentiate between various types of career indecision.

**Figure 2.1:**

**Types of career indecision**



Source: Callanan and Greenhaus (1992)



**2.8.1 Developmental Career Indecision**

According to Figure 2.1, this category of career indecision is known as 'developmentally' normal resulting from a lack of information about oneself and of the world of work (Gauy, Ratelle, Sencécal & Deschênes, 2006). Students who experience developmental indecision should experience a decrease in indecision over time as they gather information about themselves and the world of work. Cohen, Chartrand and Jowdy (1995 cited in Gauy et al., 2006) conducted a study to cluster individuals into the two types of career indecision namely, developmental and chronic. The study used four psychological characteristics to make the distinction, which are career choice anxiety, generalized indecisiveness, need for career information and the need for self information. The results of the study revealed that developmentally undecided individuals have moderate

levels of career choice anxiety, low levels of generalized indecisiveness, high need for career information and moderate need for self information.

### **2.8.2 CHRONIC INDECISION**

Chronic indecision is known as a pervasive inability to make a decision about a career (Gauy et al., 2006). Greenhaus et al. (1995) describe 'chronic indecision' as a permanent inability to set career goals. In this instance, individuals may not need self information or information about the world of work as it will not help them, because they are anxious about their career choices. Individuals who experience chronic indecision may be stably undecided over time. A study conducted by Cohen et al., (1995 cited in Gauy et al., 2006) revealed that individuals who are chronically undecided, experience high levels of career choice anxiety, high generalized indecisiveness, high need for career information and a high need for self information. Furthermore, the results indicated that chronically undecided individuals have higher levels of identity confusion and feelings of inferiority.

### **2.8.3 HYPER VIGILENT DECIDEDNESS**

According to Johnston, Driskell and Salas (1997), research studies argue that deficient decision making under stress is due to the adoption of a hyper vigilant style of decision making which has been characterized as disorganized and inefficient. It was found that a hyper vigilant decision pattern may be adaptive because the decision maker does not have the luxury of implementing a more elaborate analytic procedure. The pattern of hyper vigilant decision making is characterized by a non-systematic or

selective information search, consideration of limited alternatives, rapid evaluation of data and the selection of a solution without extensive review. Mann (1977 cited in Johnston et al., 1997) contends that hyper vigilant decision making represents an impulsive and disorganized pattern of decision making. In addition to this, hyper vigilance is viewed as a defective coping strategy in which the decision maker will fail to adequately carry out the cognitive tasks that are essential for making a stable decision.

Greenhaus et al. (1995) found that hyper vigilant individuals may have career goals but their decision is based on a lack of information about themselves and the work environment. Furthermore, the researcher states that hyper vigilant individuals rush into decisions in response to extensive stress or other factors. Similar to this view, Janis and Mann (1977 cited in Johnston et al., 1997) claim that stress tends to increase hyper vigilant decision making.

#### **2.8.4 VIGILANT DECIDEDNESS**

According to Greenhaus et al. (1995), vigilant individuals' decisions are based on sufficient self information and information about the world of work and are made with lower levels of stress and anxiety. Johnston et al. (1997) postulate that a vigilant decision making process is characterized by a systematic, organized information search and thorough consideration of all alternatives. This decision making process is described as being an ideal process whereby the individual making the choice searches for appropriate information, impartially assimilates the information and

evaluates alternatives before taking action. Furthermore, it was found that the vigilant decision making process is an analytical pattern that results in quality decisions (Johnston et al., 1997). The researchers also contend that sudden unexpected threats or time pressure may cause a hyper vigilant pattern of behaviour.

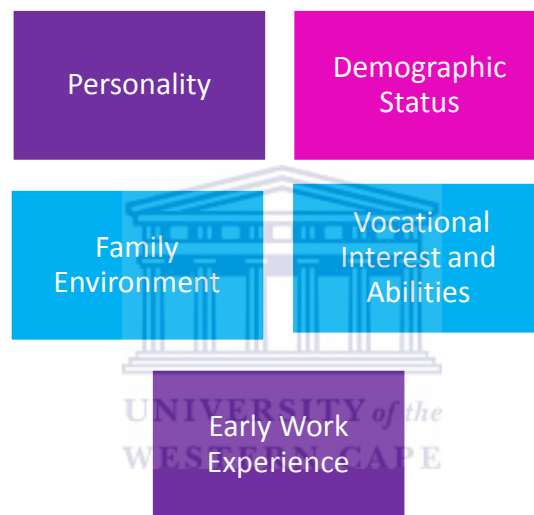
## **2.9 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CAREER INDECISION**

There are several factors associated with career decision making. Individuals may experience career indecision when they face a difficult decision with no clear or easy choice. Not all career choices individuals make will have a positive outcome and not all individuals utilize effective decision making processes (Feldman & Witcomb, 2005). The difficulties experienced when making a career choice are related to the individual's perceptions, values, personal preferences and emotional reaction (Elyadi, 2006).

Career indecision is rooted in a lack of information about oneself, lack of self confidence as well as decision making fear and anxiety. Callanan and Greenhaus (1992) are of the opinion that the primary factors which contribute to early career indecision include an individual's personality, family environment, demographic status and vocational interest and abilities. The researches further state that career indecision has seven main antecedents namely, lack of information about oneself, organization, the work environment, lack of self confidence, decision making fear and anxiety, non work demands and situational constraints.

The ensuing paragraphs address the various factors associated with career indecision. Personality and differences in personality will first be discussed, self identity and the big five personality traits followed by demographic status, vocational interest and abilities, early work experiences and the family environment (see figure 2.2 below).

**Figure 2.2: Factors contributing to career indecision: Job search behaviours**



Source: Feldman (2003)

### **2.9.1 PERSONALITY**

Feldman (2003) hypothesizes that career personality traits are correlated to career indecision, some of which include self esteem, self identity and the big five personality traits. The personality trait that is most frequently investigated with regard to career indecision, is self esteem.

It was also found that personality types (MBTI profiles) are correlated to career indecision. According to Kelly and Lee (2005), it was found that perceiving types are less decisive than judging types. It was also found

that extroverted types are more decisive as opposed to introverted types, due to the fact that extroverts have a tendency to gather more information about careers because of their exploration of the outside world. Therefore, there is a relationship between personality and career indecision.

There are various personality traits that are linked to career indecision, traits such as self esteem, self identity and the big five personality traits.

#### **2.9.1.1 SELF ESTEEM**

According to Harriot, Ferrari and Dovidio (1996), negative self statements are related to career indecision. Individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to prematurely give up on various career paths and to experience false starts in their early careers (cited in Feldman, 2003). They tend to make career decisions that will please others instead of making decisions that will meet their personal needs (Greenhaus, Callahan & Kaplan, 1995). This shows there is a significant relationship between self esteem and career decidedness (Greenhaus et al., 1995).

#### **2.9.1.2 SELF IDENTITY**

Career indecision appears to be closely related to self identity (Lee, 2005). The researcher postulates that individuals are indecisive about their career choices because they are confused about their self identity, in addition to this it was found that indecisive individuals often lack confidence in their career preferences.

London (1983 cited in Lock, 2009) is of the opinion that there are three pivotal elements of career motivation which influences an individual's career maturity. These elements include career identity, career insight and career resilience, all of which are conceptualized in self identity. Feldman and Turnley (1995) explain that career identity refers to the significance of a career in relation to one's overall identity. The characteristics of career identity include self-efficacy such as work involvement and the desire for upward mobility. According to Taylor and Betz (1983, cited in Feldman & Turnley, 1995), self-efficacy is indirectly related to career indecision amongst young adults.

It is understood that career insight relates to the extent to which individuals have realistic perceptions of themselves and their environments; individuals who lack career insight may lack the ability to set specific goals and expectations which are essential for making career related decisions. Career resilience refers to an individual's fragility in the face of excessive demands. Individuals without career resilience may become frustrated and demotivated when they are confronted with challenges as they pursue their career goals (Feldman & Turnley, 1995).

### **2.9.1.3 THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS**

Digman (1990 cited in Lock, 2009) claimed that industrial psychologists focused on the big five personality traits due to researching the role of personality in vocational choices. It has been identified that two traits namely extroversion and neuroticism are closely related to career indecision (Feldman, 2003) whereas Leong and Chervinko (1996 cited in



Lock, 2009) claims that self-consciousness and perfectionism are personality traits that are related to indecisiveness. Research found that extroverts are more sociable in the workplace and receive better hiring recommendations (Caldwell & Burger, 1998 cited in Lock 2009). Neuroticism is linked to problem solving deficiencies and career indecision. Feldman (2003) is of the opinion that individuals who are high on neuroticism are hyper vigilant in their job search behaviour or impulsive when making decisions to decrease stress levels.

### **2.9.2 FAMILY ENVIRONMENT**

According to Feldman (2003), career indecision that adolescents experience is influenced by the income of their parents.

Income influences the extent to which adolescents are able to receive education and whether or not the adolescent is able to study full time. The researcher claims that the engagement of parents in adolescents' career planning activities is inversely related to the level of career indecision adolescents experience. The author contends that the parents play a role in encouraging adolescents to follow career opportunities and they have the ability to influence their children's self efficacy by assisting them with career related information.

A study conducted by Parsons, Adler and Kaczala (1982, cited in Lock, 2009) highlights that students are immensely impacted by the attitudes their parents have toward their abilities, as opposed to their own past achievements. Additionally, parents' personal career insecurity has an impact on the level of career indecision teenagers experience. Studies

point out that a higher level of career indecision is experienced by adolescents whose parents have low job security as opposed to those who have high job security. Feldman (2003) extrapolates that children will have negative attitudes toward work and their studies if their parents experience difficulties in their career.

### **2.9.3 EARLY WORK EXPERIENCE**

Curtis and Shani (2002) state that in recent years students are employed while they pursue their studies, the researchers further stated that students develop skills, more understanding of the world of business and self confidence. However, Greenberger and Steinberg (1986 cited in Feldman, 2003) posit that part time work distracts students and as a result, their academic performance deteriorates. The study of Curtis and Shani (2002) highlighted that students claimed that they missed lectures and that their academic performance in terms of coursework results are lower than what they would have attained if they were not working part time.

According to Feldman (2003), part time work where task activities are well supervised, affords individuals the opportunity to form their vocational interests. The researcher infers that part time work is indirectly related to career indecision because it reduces any uncertainty associated with a career choice.

## **2.9.4 VOCATION INTEREST AND ABILITIES**

According to Feldman and Whitcomb (2005), decision making based on skills enables students to narrow down their career options, as identifying skills requires more self-insight than identifying interest. Lock (2009) considers both interest and abilities to play an important role in terms of individuals selecting a career. However, the researcher contends that interests may result in choosing a career where there is a variety of occupations to choose from and this may complicate the decision-making process for young adults, ultimately resulting in career indecision (Lock, 2009).

## **2.9.5 DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS**

Demographic status includes, amongst others, variables such as gender, age and ethnicity.



### **2.9.5.1 GENDER**

According to Hoffman and Torres (2001), the demographic variable that has received most attention in terms of career indecision, is gender. The researchers contend that females experience lower levels of early career indecision as opposed to males. Similarly, Feldman (2003) states that females experience less indecision than males. Research findings also suggest that females make earlier career related choices than males, this may be due to females maturing earlier than males, thus females are able to identify career goals earlier than males. However, Osipow (1987 cited in Lock, 2009) is of the opinion that there are inconsistencies with regard to gender differences and career indecision.

In a study conducted by Gauy, Senécal, Gauthier and Fernet (2003) it was found that research usually does not report on gender differences concerning career decision making, self efficacy and career indecision. Akos, Konold and Niles (2004); Barnes and Carter (2002); Hampton (2006); McCoy (2004) and Salami (2008) all cited in Talib and Aun (2009) found there is no gender differences related to career indecision. Another study conducted by Patton (2002 cited in Talib & Aun, 2009) indicated that females obtained a higher score on indecision as opposed to males on completion of the Career Development Inventory. In a cross cultural study of Chinese and British universities it was identified that males experienced fewer career difficulties than females concerning career decision making.

#### **2.9.5.2 AGE**

Research findings of Feldman (2003) suggest that young adults are more indecisive than older adults. Young adults in their late teens and mid-twenties go through a developmental phase of exploration where they are keen on enjoying freedom and not complying with normal daily routines. However, as young adults mature, they may feel the need to take on the responsibility to start their careers (Callanan & Greenhaus, 1990). Young adults take several years in the work force to discover their true strengths, weaknesses and preferences for vocations (Greenhaus et al., 1995). Super and Bohn (1970) cited in Themba (2010) posits that as adolescents mature in age, they discover which occupations they are interested in, they develop independence and they become aware of what they would like to do and they are more aware of different career paths.

Career maturity is a construct that takes into account individual differences pertaining to the readiness to make career choices, pre-plan, and take on the role as a worker (Vondracek & Reitzle 1998 cited in Themba, 2010). It was found that there are several demographic variables that are related to career maturity which includes age, race, gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity (Patton & Creed, 2001; Naidoo, 1998 both cited in Themba, 2010).

The study conducted by Daniels, Stewart, Stupnisky, Perry and Le Verso (2011) revealed that age had a slight effect on career indecision. Naidoo (1998) cited in Talib and Aun (2009) states that career indecision is influenced by age. In a study conducted by Mau (2001) which examined career decision making difficulties amongst university students, the findings revealed that there is a difference in career indecision based on age. Similarly Morrill and Boggs (1990) found that there is a significant difference in career indecision based on age.

### **2.9.5.3 RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Race is known as the physical characteristics that specify groups of people. It is considered to be the biological characteristics and physical characteristics such as skin pigmentation (Etaugh & Bridges, 2001 cited in Lock, 2009). In South Africa, the population essentially comprises of four racial groups namely, Black, White, Coloured and Indian. Fouad and Brown (2000) are of the opinion that race has significant psychological

consequences in our society. However, race is also known to be a social category of ethnicity.

Ethnicity it refers to a shared identity, shared feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values and shared behaviours resulting from ethnic group membership (Fouad & Brown, 2000). An ethnic group refers to people who are united by place of origin, ancestry and/or language. It is imperative to note that some individuals may identify themselves with a specific ethnic group and others may not. Additionally, there are no universally accepted labels that identify an individual's ethnicity. Kendall (2004) postulates that ethnic groups have five common distinguishing characteristics which are listed below:

1. Distinctive cultural traits such as language, dress style, religious customs,
2. A sense of unity,
3. A sense of ethnocentrism,
4. Membership ascribed from birth and
5. A persistent attachment to a specific territory.



The person factors of race and ethnicity both have physiological and social consequences on an individual's career development (Lent et al., 1994) cited in Lock, 2009) and it influences an individual's thought processes. According to Gloria and Hird (1999), race and ethnicity plays a pivotal role in career development. The culture that individuals are exposed to impacts

the decisions that individuals make as well as their career choice (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005).

A study by Westbrook et al. (1980 cited in Lock, 2009) which focused on race and career indecision revealed that there is greater indecision amongst Blacks than amongst Whites. However, Johnson (2007) found no significant difference of indecision existed between Blacks and Whites in their research.

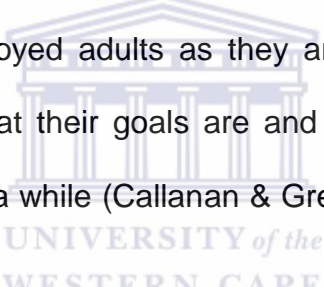
## **2.10 SOUTH AFRICAN WORKFORCE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AND CAREER INDECISION**

In the past, individuals were normally faced with one career choice. Upon matriculating, they would pursue the career choice for many years and it was hardly required of individuals to transition from one organization to another or select an alternative career path. Career indecision was common among young adults who transitioned from school to work (Bartley & Robitschek, 2000 cited in Lock, 2009). Career indecision was then described as a lack of information pertaining to oneself, organization, lack of confidence, fear of decision making, anxiety and situational factors (Lock, 2009).

However, things have changed due to global competition and other environmental forces, inter alia, organizations which offer less defined jobs, employing a diverse workforce (Generation X and Y), and offering employment on flexible work assignments. All of the aforesaid influence the context in which individuals make career related decisions. "In this

changing environment, careers are now defined as significant learnings and experiences that identify an individual's professional life, direction, competencies and accomplishments through positions, jobs, roles and assignments" (Coetzee cited in Lock, 2009, p. 27). When change takes place with regard to work context, global context or in the context of the individual (new employment opportunities or change of interest), the individual will explore new avenues. This will lead to individuals experiencing multiple career options in their life span in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work.

Lock (2009) states that the 21<sup>st</sup> century work context impacts both adolescents and employed adults as they are not sure what they want from their careers, what their goals are and how to achieve it and they may be undecided for a while (Callanan & Greenhaus, 1990 cited in Lock, 2009).

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In the context of South Africa, after the democratic elections in 1994, there were changes that took place in the composition of its workforce. The workforce is more representative of races, more women and dual working couples (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). The workforce is affected by high unemployment rates, unskilled, illiterate and ill workers that characterize the South African workforce. With regard to career indecision the variables that affect the workforce are the realities that young adolescents are confronted with. Lock (2009) states that some would continue to pursue a studying career and switching majors or career due to career uncertainty and indecision. The researcher further adds that many of the first time

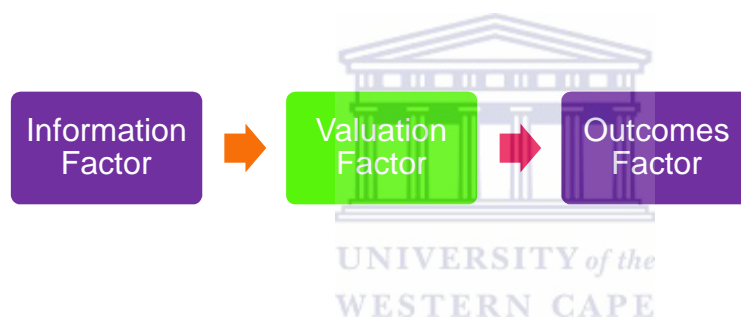


entrants into the labour market, enter with uncertainty and their decisions based on necessities which often results in career indecision.

## 2.11 INFORMATION, VALUATION AND OUTCOME FACTORS

Career maturity is known as an individual's ability to make career decisions independently. Super (1990 cited in Prideaux & Creed, 2001, p. 213) defines career maturity as "individual's readiness to cope with the developmental tasks (for) that stage of development".

**Figure 2.3: Information, valuation and outcomes factor**



Source: Germeijs and Boeck (2001)

According to figure 2.3 in a study conducted by Germeijs and De Boeck (2001) it was identified that being insufficiently informed about alternatives, valuation of problems and the uncertainty of outcomes were the sources of career indecision. The study also revealed that the outcomes factor and the valuation factor associate with career indecision. Germeijs and De Boeck (2001) posit that a lack of information relates to the following: not knowing possible alternatives or not having sufficient information on alternatives to evaluate possible outcomes.

Germeijs and De Boeck (2001) stated that the valuation factor relates to the value of clarity. The researchers further explained that it means that goals can be unclear. Secondly, the value of conflict, which implies that separate goals can be realized in different alternatives without having an alternate goal in which all separate goals are combined. Lastly, the value of evaluative evenness means that the most preferred alternatives are equally attractive as the set goal. These three sources of career indecision that were identified by Germeijs and De Boeck (2001) are related to the taxonomies of difficulties in career decision making process as established by Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996).

Germeijs and De Boeck (2001) contend that a lack of information regarding careers and the lack of information about the self are two categories of difficulties that can be encountered when making a career decision. Within each of the information categories (information about career and information about the self) a distinction is made pertaining to the difficulties that are associated with the present and future. According to Gati et al. (1996), the distinction between present and future, when related to the lack of information regarding careers, are closely associated with the two sources of career indecision namely, lack of information and uncertainty of outcomes. Lack of information of the self is related to value of clarity and evaluative evenness (Gati et al., 1996).

## **2.12 LACK OF INFORMATION AND CAREER INDECISION**

Germeijs and De Boeck (2003 cited in Mylonas, Argyropoulou & Tampouri, 2012) state that a lack of information on careers, alternative

choices and means of gathering information and the decision making process contribute to the difficulties individuals may experience as they make career related decisions. Additionally, a lack of information pertaining to the labour market may contribute to confusion.

Mau (2001) states that difficulties in decision making may occur when individuals do not have adequate information, have inconsistent information or have a lack of knowledge on how to process information to make a decision. Germeijs and De Boeck (2003) state that a lack of information is one or a combination of the following: not having a view on alternative career choices, the attributes of alternatives, not having enough information regarding alternatives and the expected outcomes in order to evaluate the attributes against objectives. Gati et al. (1996) found that a lack of information pertaining to careers and a lack of information pertaining to oneself are related to the taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making and these categories are considered to be two groups of difficulties that occur during the decision making process.

Germeijs and De Boeck (2003) state that the two groups are difficulties which are associated with the present (lack of information) and future (no certainty of outcomes). The study of Hocson (2012) revealed that participants in the study did not have enough information regarding career opportunities, they did not know how to search for careers in their field of study and they lacked information on how to obtain training for their chosen major.


A study by Nauta (2011) suggests that there may be five basic factors of career indecision namely, lack of information, need for information, trait indecision, disagreement with others and choice anxiety. For the purpose of this study only lack of information will be discussed.

Kelly and Shin (2008 cited in Botha, 2011) identified two constructs namely, neuroticism and negative career thoughts and feelings which are related to lack of information. Neuroticism is described as emotional instability (Kelly & Shin, 2008) and the researchers also contend that neuroticism is related to career indecision. Meldahl and Muchinsky (1997 cited in Kelly & Shin, 2008 p. 203) “found that college students with greater negative career thoughts had less knowledge about occupations and training and academic options than their non-neurotic peers.” Together with this Kelly and Pulver (2002 cited in Kelly & Shin, 2008) contends that neuroticism is associated with a lack of career information.

Furthermore it was highlighted that negative career thoughts and feelings in the context of career decision making are correlated to a lack of information.

Saka et al. (2008) delineate that negative career thoughts are negative expectations pertaining to the process and outcomes of career exploration, whereas negative feelings are related to anxiety experiences pertaining to the process and outcomes of career exploration (Chartrand, Robbins, Morrill, & Boggs, 1990 cited in Kelly & Shin, 2008). It was found that career pessimism (expectation of negative outcomes) is related to

chronic career indecision. The study by Creed, Patton and Bartrum (2002) revealed that pessimistic students had less knowledge regarding careers and the decision making process and were more indecisive than the optimistic students. Additionally Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, and Saunders (1996 cited in Hocsons, 2012) contend that thoughts have an influence on an individual's career decision making process and occupational development. Negative self statements have a negative effect on an individual's ability to use career information which may lead to career indecision, essentially affecting the ultimate career choice. It was also found that dysfunctional career thoughts are related to the inability to choose a study field for those students who experience career indecision (Elliot, 1995 cited in Hocsons, 2012).



Negative feelings, in this instance, career choice anxiety, is the negative affective state that an individual experiences in the career exploration and decision making process. Saka et al. (2008) state that choice anxiety is a component of chronic indecision. The study of Kelly and Shin (2008) concluded that negative career thoughts and feelings are predictors of lack of information.

### **2.13 CAREER INDECISION AND ANXIETY**

Anxiety can be looked at through two lenses, namely a state or trait. As a state it would be referred to as a temporary feeling of anxiety that arises due to specific threats and stressors, however, this may not always be the case (Savickas, 1999). Anxiety as a trait reflects an individual's unusual level of anxiety and their tendency to become anxious (Gordan & Meyer,

2002 cited in Van Reenen, 2010). It has been identified that both trait and state anxiety could influence career decidedness. Research findings of Campagna and Curtis (2007); Saunders et al. (2000) and Corkin (2008) show that there is a relationship between career decidedness and both trait and state anxiety.

In a study conducted by Austin, Dahl and Wagner (2010) it was found that negative career thoughts are revealed through emotional, verbal and behavioural responses which have an influence on career decision making. Research has found that negative career thoughts contribute to anxiety. Furthermore, this anxiety limits career development behaviour, academic undecidedness, low employment seeking status, job avoidance behaviour, career undecidedness, perfectionism and career indecision and indecisiveness (Austin et al., 2010).

Various aspects of anxiety have consistently been shown to be associated with career indecision and indecisiveness as well as with the difficulties arising during the actual choice process. According to Saka et al. (2008), there is research available to support the claim that undecided and indecisive people have higher levels of anxiety than decided individuals.

In the study conducted by Saka et al. (2008), which focused on the potential effects of anxiety on career decision making process, the study clustered anxiety into four groups. The first group relates to the fear of the process and this refers to feelings of stress and anxiety arising prior to the decision making process or anxiety evoked by perfectionism about the process. The second category relates to uncertainty involved in choosing

which refers to the three facets of uncertainty: uncertainty about the future, anxiety about being in an undecided situation, and anxiety related to low tolerance for ambiguity. The third category focused on process anxiety which refers to the process of choosing. In this category it was found that anxiety relates to perfection in choosing the “right occupation” as well as the fear of choosing the “wrong occupation” and the anxiety to take the responsibility to act on choosing the career. The fourth category relates to the anxiety of outcome, which refers to worries concerning the repercussions of the actualization of the chosen alternative, for example, the fear of failure or not meeting one’s expectation in the chosen career (Saka et al., 2008).

#### **2.14 CAREER UNCERTAINTY**

Careers are inextricably related to the world and how people understand it, how they fit into it and how they cope in the world. The traditional model of stability of deciding on a life long career of an individual’s choice and to remain in that particular career until retirement date, with at least two to three changes within a career, unfortunately can no longer be maintained due to twenty-first century developments and changing realities. The frequency of change that takes place demands of one to take cognisance where these changing realities are factors that have an impact on careers, career counselling and career guidance. Researchers concur that the consistent change that individuals experience may cause interruptions, shock and uncertainty which may become a normal human condition. Uncertainty occurs when individuals do not know what their next step will be and when to make it happen to satisfy their needs. Due to the

uncertainty and unexpected changes in the world of work, people often feel or think they are on the wrong track in addition to this they may feel confused and lost hence uncertain about their career (Joubert, 2005).

Tien (2005) simply defines career uncertainty as any factors that may influence an individual to feel uncertain about their future career. The greatest contributors of career uncertainty are the difficulties individuals experience when making career related decisions. According to Tien (2005), career decision making difficulties reflect the lack of essential elements to make the right decision. The elements of career decision making difficulties are best explained by using the taxonomy of difficulties which is consistent with the factors of career uncertainty. Morgan and Ness (2003) disclose that the taxonomies make a distinction between career decision making occurring before and during the decision making process. Factors that occur before the decision making process are a lack of readiness, a lack of information and inconsistent information are difficulties individuals may experience during the decision making process.

Career uncertainty is an important construct that plays a pivotal role in an individual's career decision making process (Card, 2008 cited in Van Reenen, 2010). The economic instability, the changing world of work and fluctuations in social and political situations have implications on the decisions and difficulties individuals experience when making career related decisions (Beerlall, 1997). In concluding this section it is imperative to note that career uncertainty is associated with any factors that influence



an individual to feel uncertain about their future career, whereas career indecision is related to failure to decide on what occupation to seek.

### **2.15 CAREER READINESS AND CAREER INDECISION**

Career ready individuals are able to define what they wish their careers to be, they are able to define their interests and are knowledgeable about which path to follow. In addition to this, a career ready student is able to encapsulate the required skills and competencies for successful entry into university (Van Reenen, 2010).

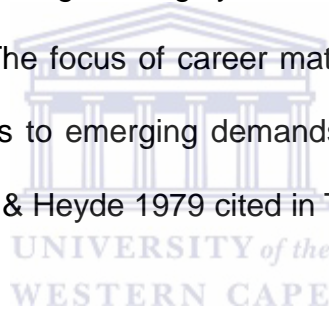
There are three major factors that prevent students from being ready to make a career decision, namely lack of motivation, dysfunctional myths and the lack of knowledge about the process (Amir & Gati, 2006). It is understood that if they are better equipped with an understanding and knowledge of their field of interest, the confusion may be alleviated (Nota & Soresi, 2003 cited in Van Reenen, 2010). In addition to this, a study conducted by Osipow (1999) revealed that there is a correlation between students who lack motivation and being career ready.

Students may be termed vocationally immature and not ready to begin the career planning process (Campagna & Curtis, 2007). Hammond and Lockman (2010) postulate insufficient knowledge and a lack of vocational maturity may minimize their participation in the career planning process.

### **2.16 CAREER MATURITY**

Career maturity is embedded in the concept of career development. Career development is defined as a life- long process (Aumudson, 2005

cited in Hall, 2005). Career maturity refers to the behaviour of individuals at different career development tasks at each stage of maturity (Alvarez Gonzalez, 1995; Alvarez Gonzalez et al., 2007 cited in Alvarez, 2008). Savickas (1999) defines career maturity as an individual's readiness to make career decisions and the ability to cope with career development tasks. It refers to the ability of an individual to make career choices (Hirschi & Lage, 2007), being knowledgeable about the requirements for career decision making and the extent to which the career choice is realistic and consistent (Hirschi & Lage, 2008). Career maturity refers to the extent to which an individual is able to carry out career developmental task at appropriate life stages Langley, du Toit and Herbst (1996 cited in Van Reenen, 2010). The focus of career maturity is the manner in which the individual responds to emerging demands, problems, challenges and expectations (Jordaan & Heyde 1979 cited in Themba, 2010).



Alvares (2008) states that there is no agreement on the conceptualizing of the construct. Super (1951, 1963) cited in Alvarez (2008) defines career maturity as the maturity an individual reflects as they pass through developmental stages, it is a comparison between an individual's stage of maturity and chronological age. Crites (1968 cited in Alvarez, 2008) compares an individual's maturity with others in different age groups but are at the same stage of maturity. Since there was no agreement on the conceptualizing of the construct it was redefined at a conference held at Montreal 1974 as one's disposition to confront vocational and career development task as they are encountered, as compared to others who

are in the same stage of life and facing the same developmental task (Alvarez, 2008).

The construct career maturity comprises of cognitive and affective dimensions. The cognitive dimension includes decision making skills and the affective dimensions consist of the attitudes toward the career decision making process (Coertse & Schepers, 2004; Patton & Creed, 2001 cited in Themba, 2010).

The aspects of career maturity, according to Langley, Du Toit and Herbst (1996), include gathering information about oneself and processing the information into self knowledge, developing and applying decision making skills, obtaining career information and converting it into knowledge of the world of work, the integration of self knowledge and the world of work and applying the knowledge in career planning (Vondracek & Reitzle, 1998 cited in Van Reenen, 2010).

Super (1959, p. 187 cited in Themba, 2010) state that career maturity has several categories namely, “1) increasing orientation to vocational choice; 2) increasing amounts of vocational information and more comprehensive and detailed planning; 3) increasing consistency of vocational preferences; 4) the crystallization of traits relevant to vocational choices; and consequently, 5) increasing wisdom of vocational preferences”. A person who has the aforesaid characteristics at the early stage of career development is considered to be career-mature and able to make better career related decisions (Themba, 2010). Additionally Patton (2006) states

that an individual is career mature if the individual does plan full exploration, have adequate career knowledge, self knowledge and decision making knowledge.

Career matured individuals have decision making competencies, however, there are individuals who are not yet competent in career decision making (Gushue & Whiston, 2006 cited in Van Reenen, 2010). Assessing career indecision provides information regarding issues individuals may experience in career decision making. According to Hall (2005), a career choice is a problem solving activity and an individual's ability to solve career related problems depend on their career maturity. A career problem solver requires cognitive operations and knowledge. Career problem solving requires a retentive memory and processing skills (Hall, 2005).

Career counselling offers assistance to individuals in the process of career development, which enables them to acquire the skills needed to plan for, choose careers and manage careers. It is important that career counsellors are aware of the counslee's state of career maturity to provide effective career guidance. "The goal of the career counsellor is achieved by facilitating the growth of information processing skills, enhancing the student's abilities as a career problem solver and decision maker" (Hall, 2005, p. 6).

## **2.17 ROLE OF CAREER COUNSELLORS**

Career indecision is a construct that professionals in the field of career guidance counselling are interested in assessing.

Nathan and Hill (2006) cited in Mylonas et al. (2012) state that individuals seek career counselling when they experience difficulties in making a decision due to not having information that is needed to make a choice, individuals not knowing themselves, as well as the lack of knowledge regarding their interests and abilities, which impacts the decision making process (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon & Saunders, 1998 cited in Mylonas et al., 2012).

According to Taylor (2007), research has been conducted to determine whether career guidance counselling has an impact on reducing the level of career indecision. The study conducted by Taylor (2007) examined the impact of career guidance counselling on the difficulties in career decision making. The researcher further stated that career guidance counselling had the greatest impact in reducing difficulties associated with a lack of information which individuals encounter when making career related decisions. Furthermore, Taylor (2007) revealed that the level of career indecision decreased as students received career guidance counselling, additionally the students who received career guidance counselling had lower levels of indecision compared to those students who did not receive any form of career guidance.

There is research available to shows that career counselling is highly effective, more specifically, it was identified that the most effective methods of career counselling are individual and career classes (Whiston, 2003 cited in Taylor, 2007). Career interventions that do not include a counselling component such as computer based test or intervention that focuses on providing information is not considered effective (Whiston,

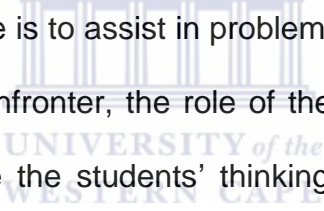
Brecheisen & Stephens, 2003 cited in Taylor, 2007). Furthermore the study of Taylor examined the impact the career counsellor has on career indecision, a study revealed that a career guidance counsellor was effective in providing information that the participants of the study required in career guidance counselling.

Ferguson (2007) recommends community colleges and universities create an environment where career decision making and subject majors are part of the students' academic plan. Ferguson (2007) states that one on one career counselling is more effective for smaller colleges and universities - if the university or college has a career centre it can partner with the counselling and advising departments and refer students when necessary. If the student is unsure about a major, the counsellor or advisor can refer them to the career centre to undergo some career assessments. After the assessment, the career centre can refer the students back to the counsellors or advisors to confirm which major matches the career or careers identified by the career assessment.

Gauy, Senécal, Gauthier and Fernet (2003) postulate that schools and tertiary institutions should work together to inform students about career prospects and how to make informed career choices. The educators could provide information pertaining to elements such as the awareness of the attributes future employers seek, different types of jobs and the demand for these jobs which are in line with the degree programmes. This information may enable students to make more informed decisions about

their degrees of study and their future careers, which could ultimately minimize career indecision (Taylor, 2007).

A good counsellor serves the client as a coach. According to Hudson (1999 cited in Hall, 2005, p. 12) there are “five coaching roles for career coaches: educating, sponsoring, coaching, counselling and confronting”. As an educator, the counsellor provides and imparts knowledge, skills, and performance expectations to students. As a sponsor, the counsellor emphasizes long-term development. As a coach, the counsellor mentors, encourages, confronts, listens, motivates and aims at improving the performance of the student (Spokane, Meir, & Catalano, 2000).



As a counsellor the role is to assist in problem solving and provide support to individuals. As a confronter, the role of the counsellor is to give direct feedback, to challenge the students' thinking, and discuss sticky issues with them. Furthermore, career guidance assists individuals to make more informed career related decisions (Esters, 2007). It comprises of several activities that enhance an individual's self-awareness, vocational knowledge, enhances career decision-making skills and adapts to occupational choices after they have been implemented.

The role of guidance counsellors is to provide educational guidance, vocational guidance, counselling to assist the individuals to choose and prepare for an occupation that matches their interests and aptitudes and personal and social guidance. Additionally, counsellors assist individuals to acquire skills that will enable them to plan for their careers and choose

jobs (Kelechi & Ihuoma, 2011). Career guidance enables an individual to make more valuable career related decisions.

## **2.18 CONCLUSION**

Throughout this chapter it has been revealed that there are many factors that impact and influence individuals when they are required to make a career related decision and how these factors influence an individual's readiness to make career choices. It highlights that the assistance of professionals can alleviate the level of career indecision that individuals may experience. A common theme in career indecision is the importance of information and how a lack thereof is correlated to career indecision (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2001; Morgan & Ness, 2003). The literature also focuses on the transitioning of school leavers into university, career indecision, career theories, the nature of career indecision, career indecision and indecisiveness, value of career indecision, types of career indecision, factors associated with career indecision, career uncertainty, career readiness, career maturity and the role of career counsellors. In essence career indecision comes and goes as a decision is made, implemented and outdated; it is part of a developmental phase individuals go through (Osipow, 1999).

The following chapter discusses the research design, research methodology, the sample, data collection procedure and statistical procedures used to analyse the data.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research path that the researcher followed in the investigation of career indecision amongst undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape. It explores the sampling procedure, statistical techniques, measuring instruments (including the psychometric properties), the data collection method as well as the statistical methods used to analyse the data collected in this study.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is known as a path researchers follow when conducting research (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). When conducting research, researchers should provide appropriate information which relates to the research hypotheses (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003).

Probability and non-probability sampling are the two main sampling methods used in research. Probability sampling gives all participants a chance of being selected, whereas non-probability sampling does not give all participants a chance to be selected (Sekaran, 2001). Certain non-probability sampling plans are more dependable than others and may possibly offer some important leads to potentially useful information regarding the population (Sekaran, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the sampling method used was a non-probability sampling design, based on the method of convenience.

The first purpose of convenience sampling in this research, according to Sekaran (2003), involves the process of collecting information from members of the population who are conveniently available to provide it. The advantages of making use of convenience sampling are that it is quick, convenient and less expensive. However, convenience sampling cannot be generalized and this would be seen as a disadvantage. Researchers may at times be less concerned about generalizability than they are about obtaining an amount of preliminary information in a quick and inexpensive way. Sekaran (2003) however, recommends that a larger sample be used to overcome the restricted generalizability.



### **3.3 POPULATION**

Sekaran (2003) describes a population, as the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher would like to investigate. Similarly, Huysamen (1994) defines a population as the total group of all the members, cases or elements that a researcher wishes to draw conclusions from. Babbie and Mouton (2008) posit that an element is a component from which information is obtained.

The population size for the current study is 1153 students who are currently registered as undergraduate students in a particular faculty at an academic institution in the Western Cape. The undergraduate students comprised first, second and third year students.

### **3.4 SAMPLE**

Sekaran (2003) states that a sample is a subset of the population as it consists of some members selected from the population. Therefore, it is not all the members of the population that would form part of the sample. Sekaran (2003, p. 267) further contends that it is “the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that the study of the sample and understanding of its properties and characteristics would make it possible for one to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements.”

The sample size for this study comprised 224 undergraduate students. According to Sekaran (2003), any sample between 30 and 500 is considered appropriate for most research studies. To ensure the intended sample size of 224 respondents was met, the researcher distributed 440 questionnaires of which a response rate of 51% was achieved. According to Sekaran (2000), a 30% response rate is considered acceptable for most research endeavours.

### **3.5 PROCEDURE**

Permission to conduct the study as well as ethical clearance was obtained from the respective committees of the academic institution. Thereafter, various lecturers in the Accounting and Industrial Psychology departments were approached. They were requested to distribute the questionnaires on behalf of the researcher.

Depending on available time some lecturers either distributed the questionnaires at the end of a lecture session and requested students to return the completed questionnaire in the following lecture period whilst others allowed students the opportunity to complete the questionnaires during the lecture period. A cover letter attached to the questionnaire, explained the purpose of the study. In addition students were also informed that their participation was voluntary, that responses would remain anonymous and confidential as no identifying information was required and that the information they provided would only be used for research purposes in the study. Furthermore, instructions for completing the questionnaires were attached to ensure successful completion thereof.

Upon completion of the questionnaires the lecturers returned the questionnaires to the researcher on the agreed date.



### **3.6 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

A survey approach was utilized to evaluate career indecision amongst the students. The data was gathered by distributing 440 questionnaires to undergraduate university students. Sekaran (2003, p. 233) defines a questionnaire as a set of pre-formulated written questions to which respondents record their answers. Sekaran (2003) posits that questionnaires are resourceful mechanisms for data collection, provided that the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the dependent and independent variables of interest.

For this research study, a self developed demographic questionnaire and the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire were used to gather the information that would provide insight into the research questions. The data gathered from each questionnaire was evaluated as separate data sources.

The advantages of using a quantitative method, more specifically questionnaires, are that they are cheaper, less time consuming and give the assurance of no interview bias. Collecting data from a survey approach, allows the researcher to gather information from large sample groups and it can be administered with ease (Mouton, 1996). Additionally, Weirs (1998) states that questionnaires are an easy way of analysing information and they afford the participants an opportunity to respond accurately. However, Mouton (1996) puts forward that when utilizing questionnaires the response rates are quite low; together with this, incomplete questionnaires are also considered a disadvantage (Weier, 1998) as no qualitative information is obtained due to the forced-choice format.

### **3.7 SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

A biographical questionnaire was compiled by the researcher to solicit information on respondents' gender, age, race, degree programme, current year of enrolment, a distinction between full time or part time students, access to career counselling, whether counselling was received, whether or not the counsellor was helpful, sureness on selecting modules and degree programmes, and whether or not career advice would be

helpful. The data is presented graphically and discussed to provide an indication of the findings in respect of the variables being investigated in this study.

### **3.8 SECTION B: CAREER DECISION MAKING DIFFICULTY QUESTIONNAIRE (CDDQ)**

#### **3.8.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF THE CDDQ**

Difficulties in career decision making is one of the most commonly identified problems in career psychology (Osipow, 1999). The development of the questionnaire stemmed from a theoretical categorization of difficulties which individuals may experience as they go through the process of decision making. The taxonomy has several aspects related to career decision making difficulties. The categorized taxonomy separates the difficulties individuals encounter, such as the difficulties experienced prior to the decision making and difficulties encountered during decision making (Tien, 2005 cited in Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996). The Career Decision Making Difficulty Questionnaire consists of 34 statements which investigate the challenges that people encounter as they make decisions pertaining to their career paths. These statements are scored on a nine point likert scale where 1 = does not describe me and 9 = describes me well.

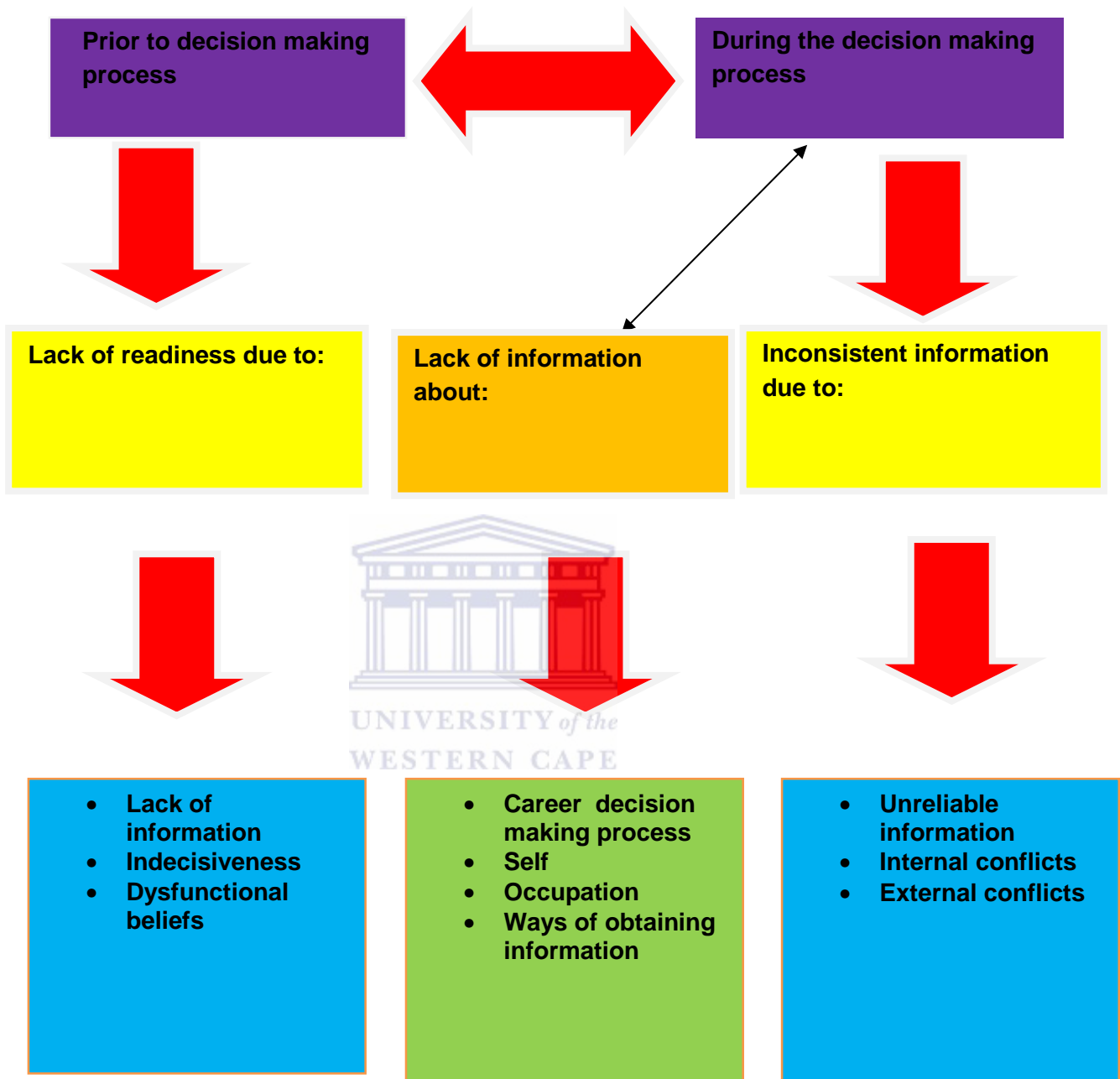
The questionnaire has two broad categories which are subdivided into three sub-categories. The three sub-categories are: (1) **lack of readiness** which comprises of 10 statements, (2) **lack of information** includes 12 statements

and (3) the **inconsistent category** comprises 10 statements (Mylonas et al., 2012). As a measuring instrument the CDDQ is able to identify substantial problems that students may experience. The information gathered from the questionnaire provides knowledge of the difficulties associated with career decision making and this information could be effective in career counselling practices (Osipow, 1999).

Gati et al. (1996) developed a model that presents the difficulties that individuals may experience. The model (see figure 3.1 on the following page) summarizes the two broad categories which have sub-categories that are based on finer details.



**Figure 3.1: Categories of decision making difficulties based on the taxonomy of Gati et al. (1996)**



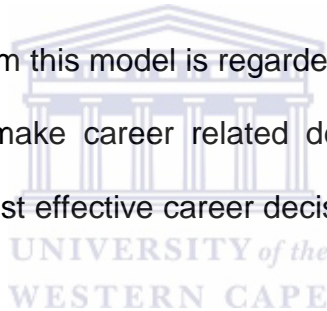
Source: Gati et al. (1996 cited in Van Rensen, 2010, p. 101)

Tien (2005) explains that the top of the taxonomy are the two main categories prior to the beginning of the decision making process and during the process. The



category prior to the beginning of the process is further subdivided into 'lack of readiness' due to a lack of motivation, indecisiveness and dysfunctional myths. The category 'during the process' is subdivided into the following two factors: 'lack of information' and 'inconsistent information.' According to Tien (2005), lack of information includes a lack of self knowledge, information regarding occupations, the decision making process and different methods of obtaining information. Inconsistent information relates to internal and external conflicts and unreliable information.

Gatti et al. (1996) define the taxonomy of difficulties as deviations from individuals who are able, willing and aware of the fact that they need to make a career decision. Any deviation from this model is regarded as a difficulty that could affect an individual's ability to make career related decisions, such as not allowing individuals to make the most effective career decisions or not enabling individuals to make a career decision.



### **3.8.2 RELIABILITY OF THE CDDQ**

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument regardless of the instability of test takers and administrators (Sekaran, 2003).

A study conducted by Gati et al. (1996) focusing on the reliability of the CDDQ which focused on an Israeli and American sample of 563 participants, revealed that the CDDQ has a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.95. More specifically, the Israeli group showed a median scale Cronbach reliability alpha of 0.78 whereas the American sample showed a median scale Cronbach reliability alpha of 0.77.

A subsequent study conducted by Osipow and Gati (1998) found the total reliability score to be high, with a coefficient at 0.94. Furthermore, the findings of a study by Tien (2005) in order to develop a Chinese version where amendments were made to the CDDQ, revealed that the internal consistency of the CDDQ ranged from 0.61-0.93.

### **3.8.3 VALIDITY OF THE CDDQ**

Sekaran (2003) attests that the validity of an instrument relates to the extent to which it actually measures what it is supposed to measure.

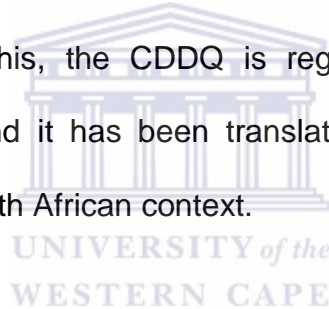
A study conducted by Gati and Saka (2001) concluded that the CDDQ is able to distinguish between decided and undecided students relative to the overall decision making difficulties. The research of Gati and Saka (2001) contends that the CDDQ is a useful measuring instrument that evaluates the effectiveness of career interventions. Additionally it was identified that the instrument is a useful tool that differentiates between the various career difficulties individuals may experience.

Kelly and Wei-Chien (2002 cited in Van Rensen, 2010) found that the CDDQ is a valuable contribution to the measurement of career indecision as it provides a systematic and a quick assessment of a wide variety of decision making problems. In addition to this, it is based on the decision theory which enables career counsellors to formulate interventions. However, the researchers found that the CDDQ has limited coverage in addressing decision problems even though there is literature which provides evidence pertaining to

the reliability and validity of the instrument. One limitation raised, however, is the need for further studies to be conducted on a more diverse cultural sample (Gati et al., 1996). Nonetheless, the CDDQ gives insight to understand where difficulties arise in the career decision making process (Amir & Gati, 2006).

### **3.9 RATIONALE FOR USE**

According to Amir and Gati (2006), the 34 statements explore difficulties in decision making relating to a career path. The instrument serves as a diagnostic assessment in career counselling because it highlights problem areas that students could improve on. The CDDQ provides information regarding where difficulties are encountered during the decision making process. In addition to this, the CDDQ is regarded suitable for different countries and cultures and it has been translated into 18 languages, thus making it useful in the South African context.



### **3.10 STATISTICAL METHODS**

For this research study, the research questions were tested using a number of statistical techniques, which included descriptive and inferential statistics.

Statistical methods involve collecting, assessing, summarizing and interpreting quantitative data to determine its essential causes, statistical relationships, patterns and trends. According to Leary (2004), this process requires the researcher to analyse the data that has been collected. The aim of statistics is to summarize and provide answers to the research questions. The statistical programme used for the analysis and interpretation of the data is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

### **3.10.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

In most organizational research it is the interest of the researcher to determine how frequently a certain phenomenon occurs, the mean average or the average score of the data collected, as well as the extent of the variability between the variables. This is known as descriptive statistics. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to describe the phenomenon of interest (Sekaran, 2003).

Furthermore, Sekaran (2003) explains that descriptive statistics involves the transformation of raw data into a form that would provide information that describes factors of a particular situation. This is accomplished through the ordering and manipulation of the raw data collected. For the current study, means and standard deviations were used to describe the data obtained from the CDDQ, and frequencies and percentages reflect the information obtained from the biographical questionnaire which is based on the respondents' characteristics.

### **3.10.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS**

With regard to inferential statistics, the researcher aims to understand how variables relate to each other and whether or not there are differences between two or more groups. The purpose of inferential statistics is to allow the researcher to draw inferences from the sample to the population (Sekaran, 2003). Furthermore, Sekaran (2003) contends that inferential statistics are employed when generalizations from a sample to a population are made.

For this research study, the inferential statistics are based on the examination of each of the hypotheses formulated for the study. All statistical test results were computed at the 2-tailed level of significance in accordance with hypotheses presented (Sekaran, 2003). The statistical methods utilized in the research study included the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, T-Test, Anova and Chi-Square. Inferential statistics provide insight into the degree of certainty with which predictions can be made regarding obtaining the same results in future research (Gordan & Meyer, 2002).

### **3.10.2.1 THE PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION**

According to Sekaran (2003), the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Coefficient is the correlation between two variables and the extent to which the variables are related. It reflects the linear relationship between the two variables. The relationship between the two variables could either be a perfect negative relationship or perfect positive relationship and could range between -1 (negative relationship) and +1 (positive relationship). When the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient is used to measure the relationship between variables of a population, it is designated with a “ $p$ ” and when measured in a sample, it is designated with a “ $r$ ”.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between lack of information and career indecision amongst undergraduate university students. This statistical method is a measure of correlation which quantifies the strength as well as direction of such a statistically significant relationship (Sekaran, 2003).

### **3.10.2.2 T-TEST**

The t-test statistically measures differences between two sample means Howell (1999, cited by Lock, 2009). According to Sekaran (2001), a T-test enables the researcher to establish whether or not there are mean differences between two groups which are both related to a specific variable. For this study the T-test was used to determine if there were any significant differences in career indecision amongst undergraduate students based on their gender.

### **3.10.2.3 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)**

ANOVA deals with differences between the sample means, taking into account that there are no restrictions to the number of means (Howell, 1999 cited in Lock, 2009). According Gracetter and Wallnau (2008 cited by Themba, 2010), ANOVA is a hypothesis testing procedure that allows the researcher to determine any differences between two or more groups and mean differences in a single hypothesis.

Analysis of variance is used to determine whether there are significant mean differences among more than two groups on either an interval or ratio-scaled dependant variable. "The results obtained from ANOVA demonstrate whether or not the means of the various groups are significantly different from one another as shown by the *F* statistic" (Sekaran, 2001 cited in September 2010, p. 69). In this study, ANOVA was used to determine differences in career indecision based on age.

#### **3.10.2.4 CHI SQUARE**

According to Burns and Burns (2008), the chi square is the most common non-parametric test of significance used when variables in a research study are nominal. The chi square distribution uses data in the form of counts or frequencies within categories. It tests hypotheses related to the independence or association of frequency counts in various categories. In this instance the chi square was used to assess the relationship between the access to a career counsellor and career indecision amongst undergraduate students.

The principle of using this statistical technique allows researchers to compare observed frequencies in a sample with expected frequencies to determine whether or not there is a difference between the observed and expected frequencies which allows the researcher to either reject the null hypotheses or accept the alternative hypothesis (Burns & Burns, 2008).

#### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

The chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodology used in this study. It described the population and sample of respondents and it highlights the procedure followed for data collection. It explained the rationale for and inclusion of the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire, and highlights the reliability and validity aspects of the measuring instrument. The chapter concludes with the statistical techniques used to test the hypotheses.

The following chapter provides a detailed analysis of the results of the study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous section, the research methodology and design utilised during the current study were outlined. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted and is based on the empirical analyses conducted to test the hypotheses.

The statistical programme used for the analyses and presentation of data in this research is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The descriptive statistics computed for the study are presented first in an outline of the characteristics of the sample with regards to the variables included in the study. The descriptive statistics calculated for the sample are provided in the sections that follow. That is, the data pertaining to the variables included in the study, as collected by the measuring instruments employed, are summarised by means of calculation of descriptive measures. In this manner, the properties of the observed data clearly emerge and an overall picture thereof is obtained.

Thereafter, the analysis of the construct relevant to the study, that is, career indecision, is presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. Conclusions are then drawn on the basis of the obtained results.



## **4.2 RESULTS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **4.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the variables included in the biographical questionnaire. The demographic variables that receive attention are gender, age, race, degree programme, enrolment, full time or part time status, access to career counselling, career counselling, module or degree choice and curriculum advice. Descriptive statistics, in the form of frequencies and percentages, are subsequently presented graphically for each of the above-mentioned variables based on the characteristics of the research sample (n = 224).

#### **4.2.1.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

This section highlights the descriptive statistics obtained from the demographic questionnaire. The biographical characteristics included:

- Gender of respondents
- Age of respondents
- Race of respondents
- Degree programme for which respondents are registered
- Enrolment year of respondents
- Study status of respondents
- Access to formal or informal career counseling by respondents
- Whether career counseling was useful, if sought, by respondents
- Certainty of career or module choice of respondents
- Curriculum advice and its impact on module choice of respondents

The descriptive statistics are graphically presented and discussed in the ensuing pages.

**Figure 4.1 illustrates the gender of respondents**

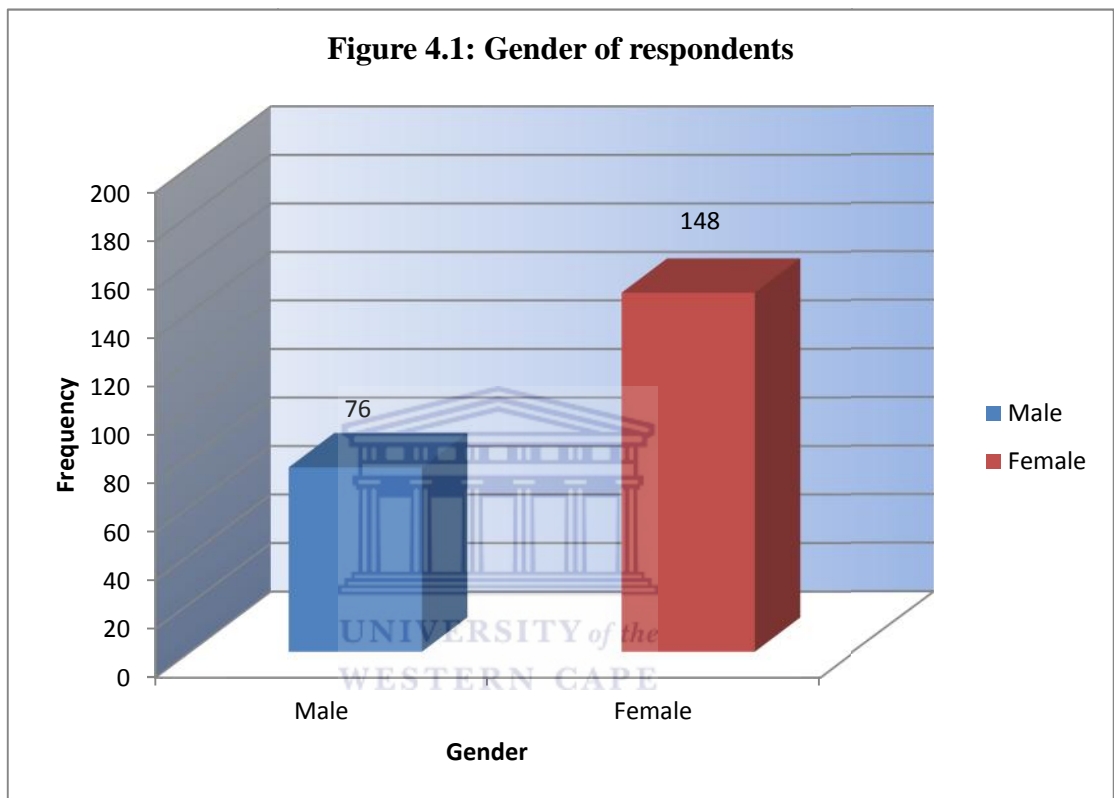
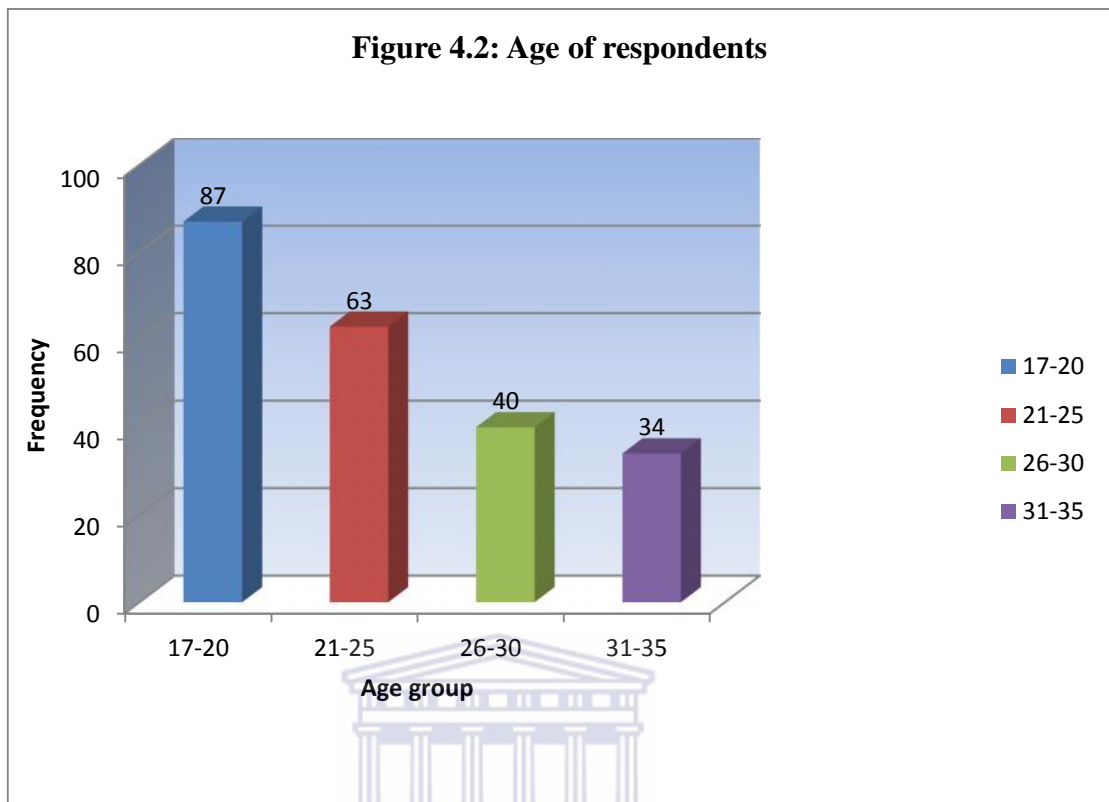


Figure 4.1 depicts that female respondents represented 66% of the sample ( $n = 148$ ), with male respondents comprising 34% of the sample ( $n = 76$ ).

**Figure 4.2 depicts the age of respondents**



With respect to figure 4.2, it may be observed that 39% of the sample was between the age of 17-20 years ( $n = 87$ ), with an additional 28% being in the age group 21-25 years ( $n = 63$ ). While 18% of the sample are in the age category 26-30 years ( $n = 40$ ), the remaining 15% were between 31-35 years of age ( $n = 34$ ).

Figure 4.3 presents the race group of respondents

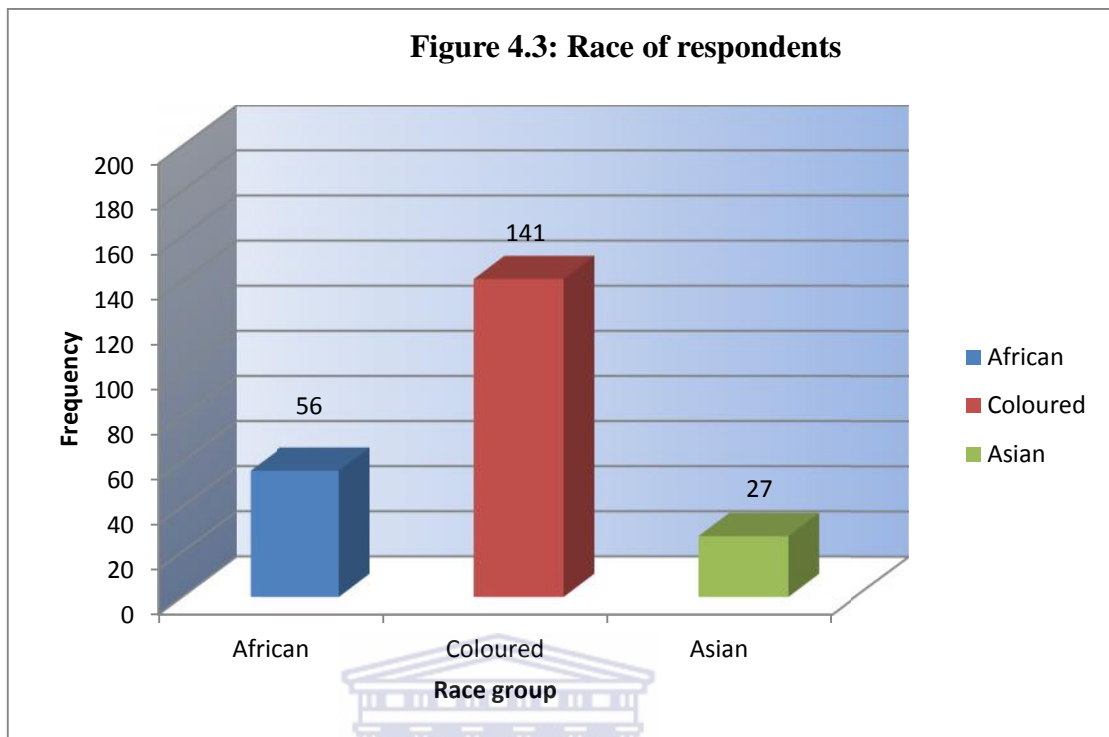
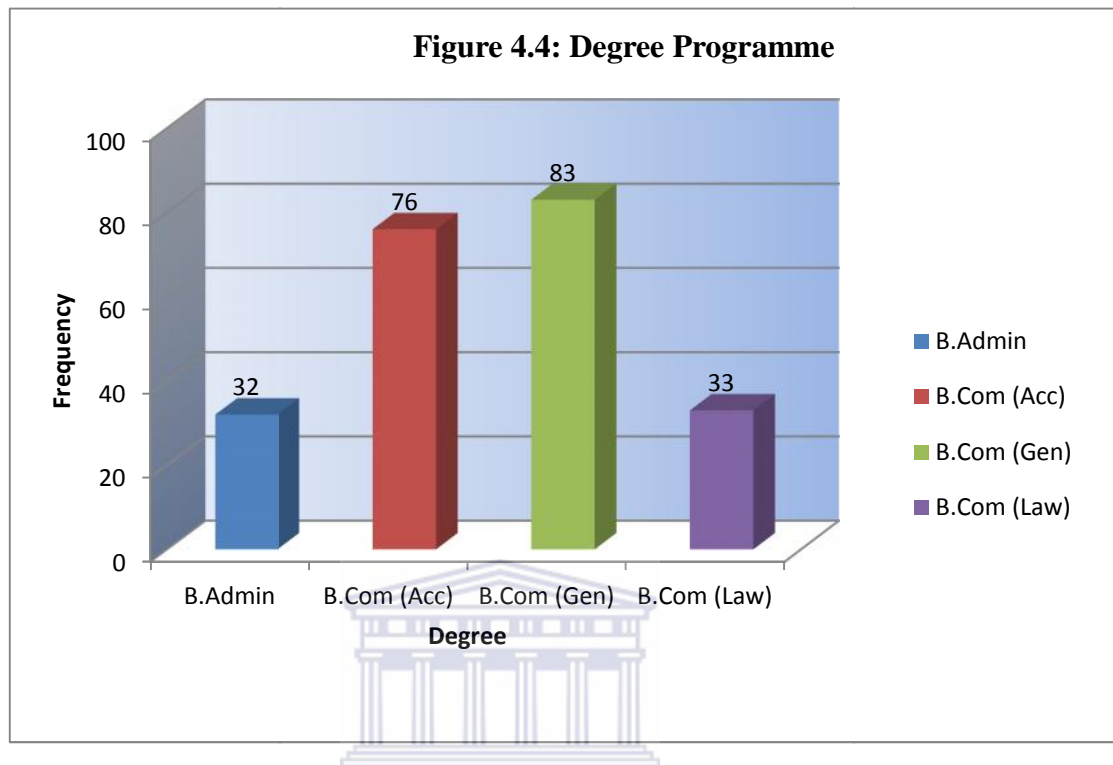


Figure 4.3 reveals that 63% of the sample was constituted of Coloured respondents ( $n = 141$ ). African respondents represented 25% of the sample ( $n = 56$ ), with Asian respondents comprising 12% of the sample ( $n = 27$ ).

The degree programme for which undergraduate students are currently registered is depicted in figure 4.4



With reference to figure 4.4, it is apparent that 37% of the respondents were pursuing a B.Com (General) degree ( $n = 83$ ). Moreover, 34% of the sample were registered for a B.Com (Accounting) degree programme ( $n=76$ ). Those registered for a B.Com (Law) degree constituted 15% of the respondents ( $n = 33$ ) and 14% of respondents were studying towards a B.Administration degree ( $n = 32$ ).

Figure 4.5 portrays the enrolment year of the respondents

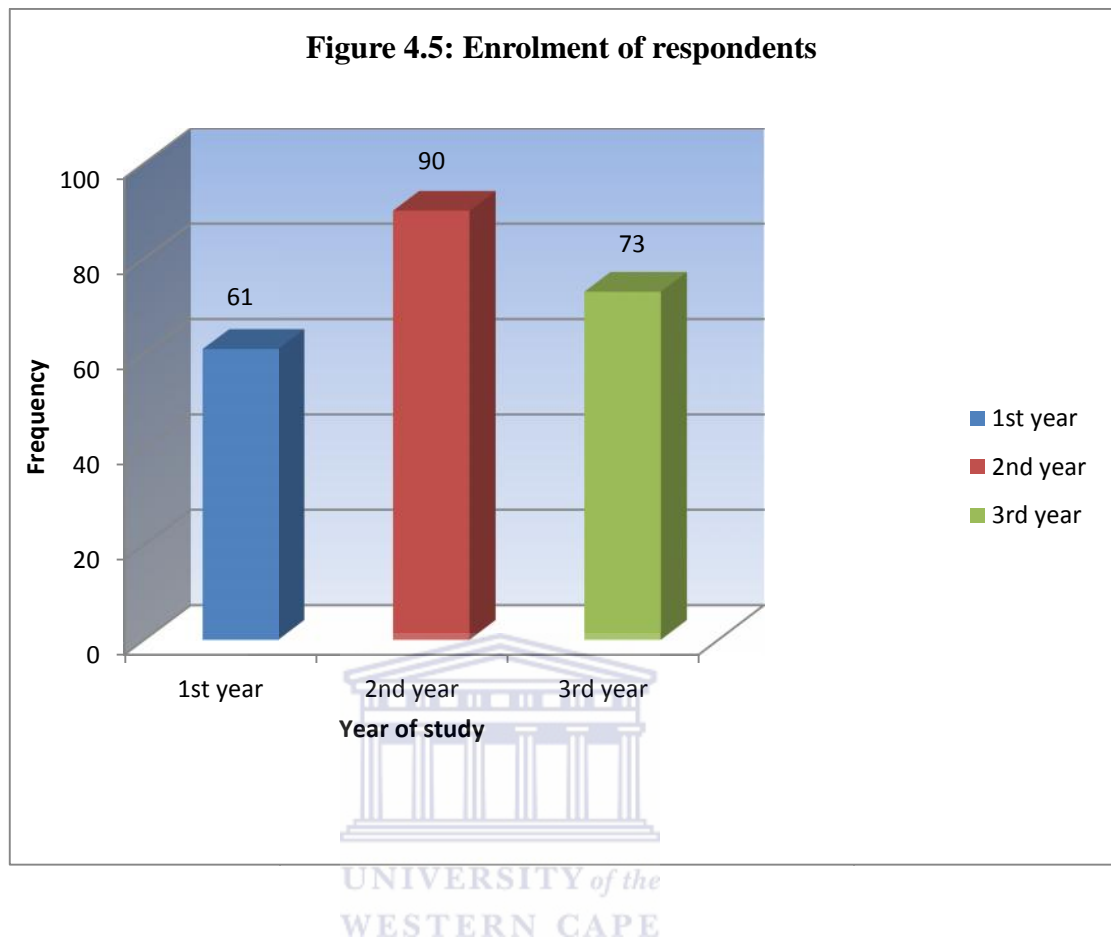
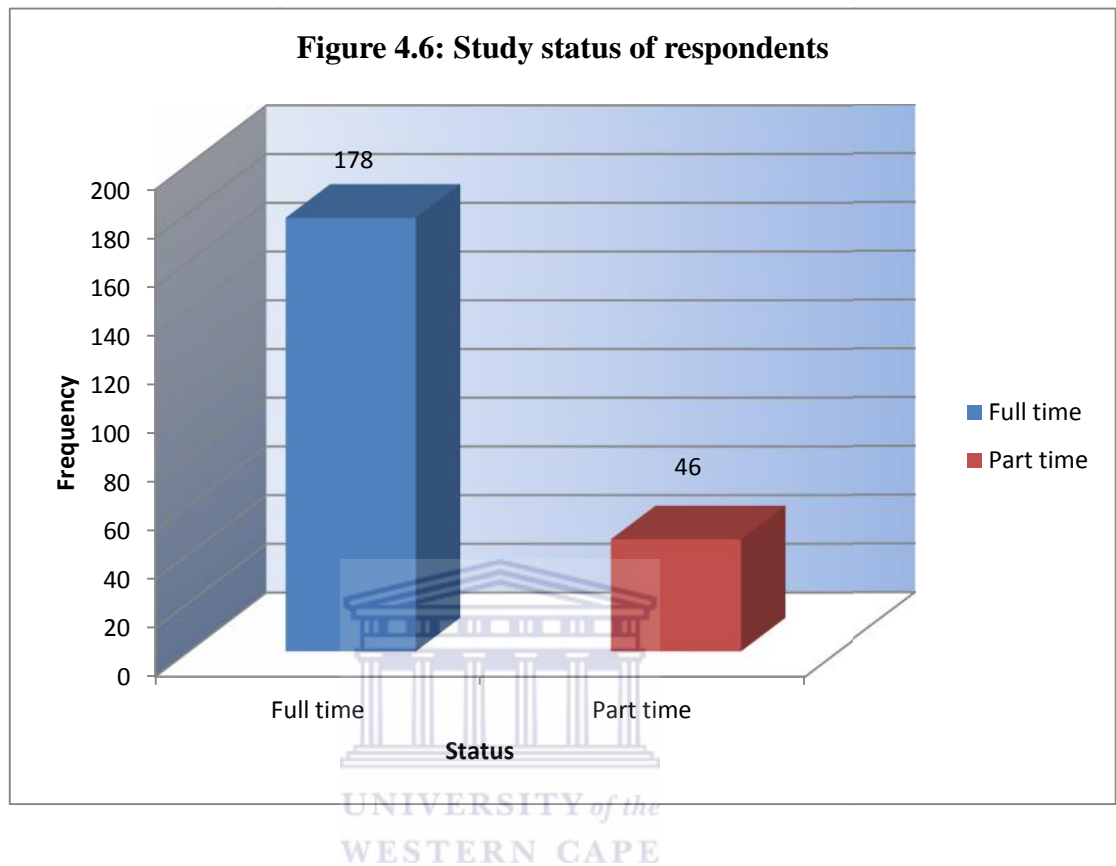


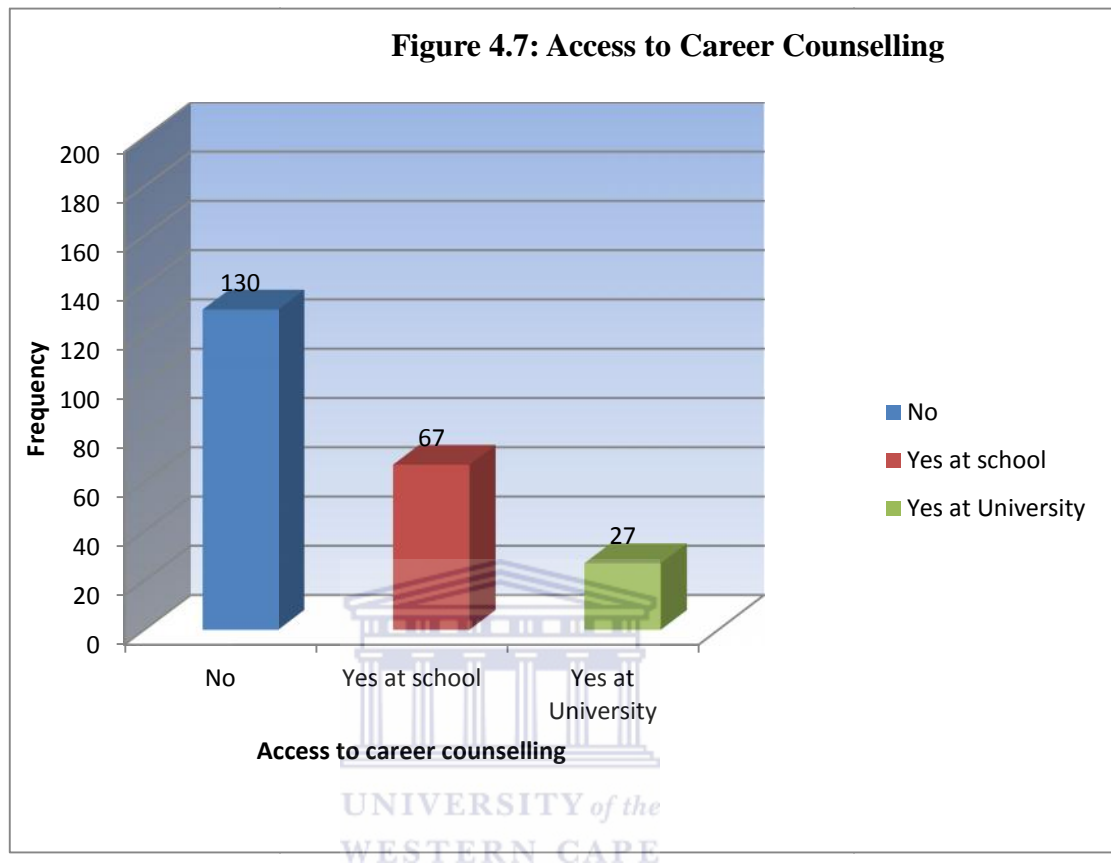
Figure 4.5 illustrates that 40% of the sample were in their second year of study ( $n = 90$ ). Moreover, 33% of the respondents were in their third year ( $n = 73$ ), and 27% were in their first year ( $n = 61$ ).

Figure 4.6 illustrates the study status of the sample of undergraduate students



It is evident when viewing figure 4.6 that 79% of the respondents were studying full time ( $n = 178$ ). The remaining 21% of the respondents were studying on a part time basis ( $n = 46$ ).

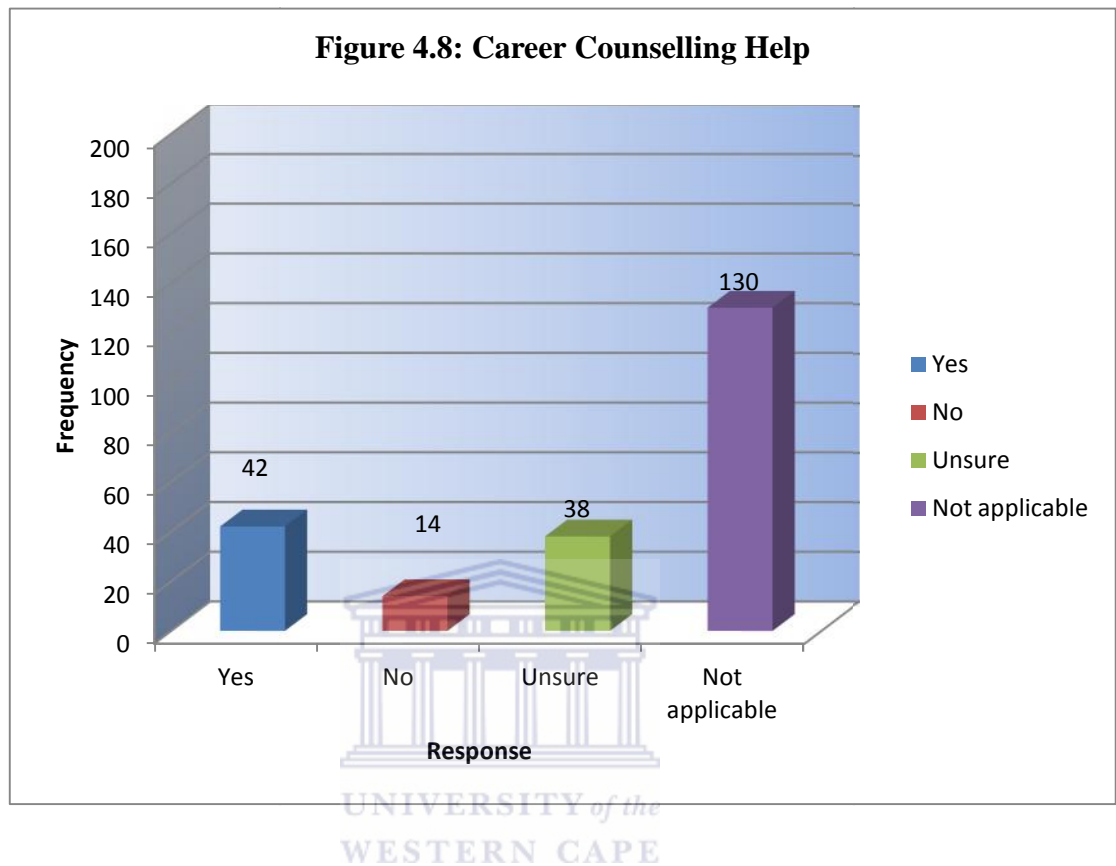
**Figure 4.7 depicts access to formal or informal career counselling by undergraduate students**



With respect to figure 4.7, it may be observed that 58% of the respondents had not had access to formal or informal career counselling ( $n = 130$ ). While 30% of the respondents had gained access to career counselling at school ( $n = 67$ ), only 12% had gained access to career counselling at university.

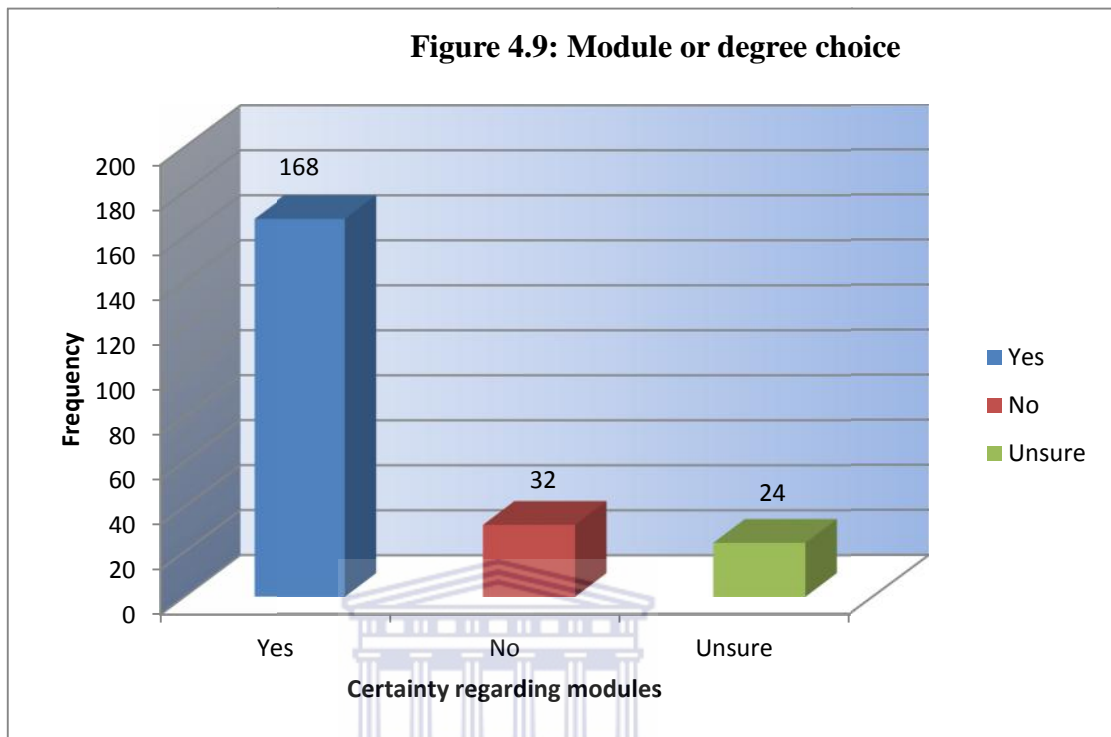


Figure 4.8 presents information in relation to whether career counselling was useful, if sought



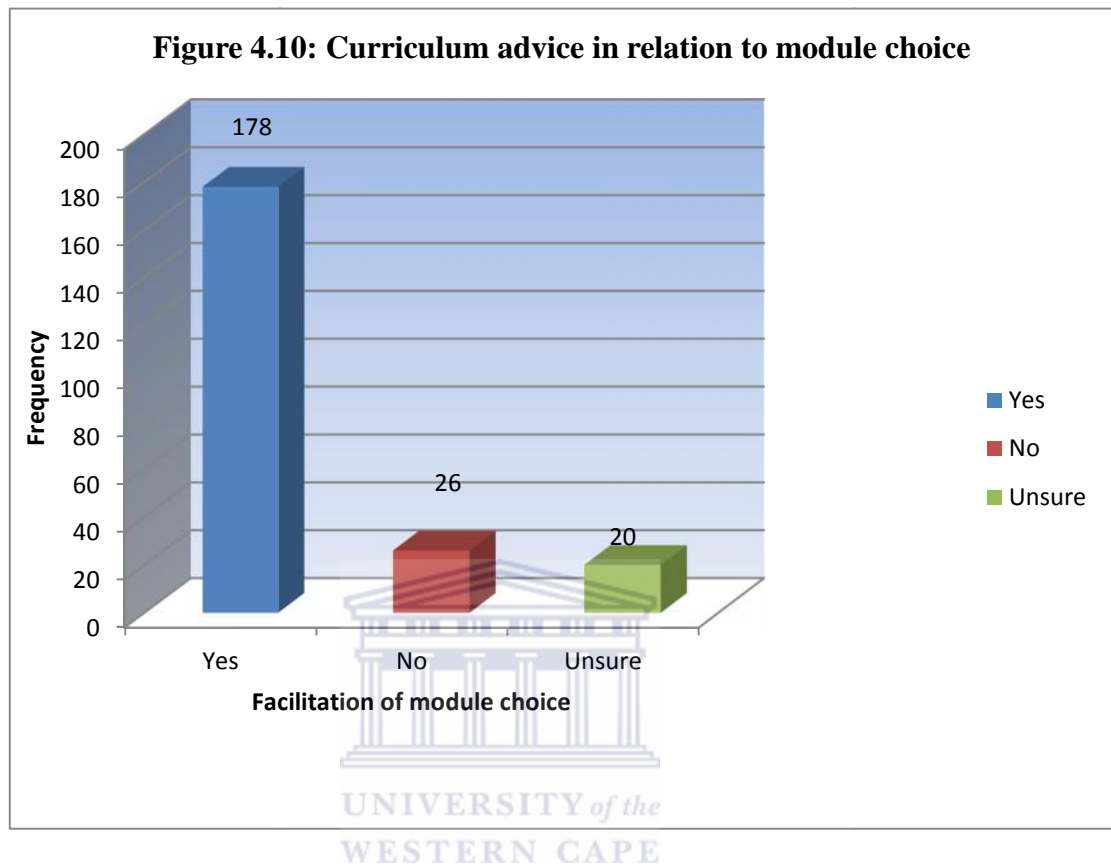
A large proportion of the respondents, that is 58% had no access to career counselling ( $n = 130$ ). Of those who had gained access to career counselling, 19% were of the opinion that it had assisted them in some way ( $n = 42$ ). In addition, 17% were unsure whether they had derived any benefit from career counselling ( $n = 38$ ), and the remaining 6% ( $n = 14$ ) indicated that they had not been helped by the career counsellor in any way.

Figure 4.9 presents the certainty of module or degree choices of undergraduate respondents



From figure 4.9, it is evident that 75% of the respondents (n=168) are sure of their module or degree. A further 14% (n = 32) were not sure of their module or degree choice, and 11% (n = 24) were unsure of their modules or degree.

**Figure 4.10 provides an insight into curriculum advice and its impact on module choice**



While figure 4.10 reveals that 79% of the respondents felt they would facilitate module choice decisions ( $n = 178$ ), 12% of the respondents felt it would not assist in making module choices ( $n = 26$ ) and 9% felt that they were unsure about the efficacy of curriculum advice in module choice decisions ( $n = 20$ ).

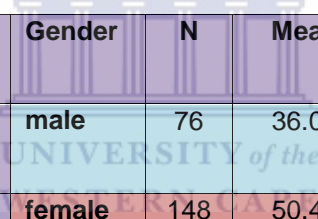
## 4.2 INFERENCEAL STATISTICS

The following section addresses the results obtained for the inferential statistics based on the statistical techniques used to test the hypotheses.

### 4.2.1 T-TEST

H<sub>1</sub> There is a statistically significant difference in career indecision amongst undergraduate students based on gender.

**Table 4.1: Gender differences in career indecision making difficulties amongst undergraduate university students**



Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Inconsistent Information	male	76	36.01	16.77	-2.61	0.03*
	female	148	50.49	16.66		
Lack of Information	male	76	22.88	9.49	-1.50	0.14
	female	148	24.48	10.64		
Lack of Readiness	male	76	12.41	4.82	-.44	0.00*
	female	148	16.63	5.07		

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The results presented in table 4.1 depict that there are statistically significant differences in the dimension “Inconsistent Information” between male and female students ( $t = -2.61, p < 0.05$ ). There were also statistically significant differences in “Lack of Readiness” based on gender ( $t = -.44, p < 0.01$ ). There was no statistically significant difference in “Lack of Information” based on gender ( $t = -1.50, p > 0.05$ ).

#### 4.3.2 ANOVA

H<sub>2</sub> There is a statistically significant difference in career indecision amongst undergraduate students based on age.

**Table 4.2: ANOVA indicating differences in career indecision based on age**



	Career indecision	
	F	p
Age	0.27	0.03*

\*  $p < 0.05$

The results exploring whether there are significant differences in career indecision amongst undergraduate students on the basis of age are presented in table 4.2. The results suggest that there is a statistically

significant difference in career decision making based on age ( $F = 0.27$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

### 4.3.3 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION

$H_3$  There is a statistically significant relationship between lack of information and career indecision amongst undergraduate students.

**Table 4.3 Pearson correlation between lack of information and career indecision**

	Career Indecision	
	Pearson	Sig (2-tailed)
<b>Lack of Information</b>	0.39	0.005**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.3 indicates the relationship between lack of information and career indecision amongst undergraduate students. The results indicate that there is a moderate relationship between lack of information and career indecision amongst the sample of undergraduate students ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

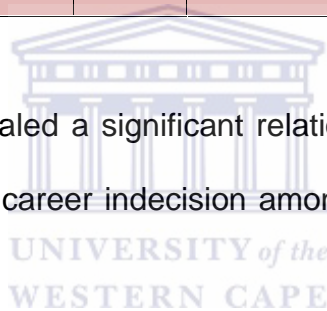
#### 4.3.4 CHI SQUARE

H<sub>4</sub> There is a statistically significant relationship between access to career counsellor and career indecision amongst undergraduate students

**Table 4.4 Relationship between access to a counsellor and career indecision**

Access to career counsellor	Yes	No	Unsure	$\chi^2$	P
	168	32	24	11.7	0.00**

A chi-square test revealed a significant relationship between access to a career counsellor and career indecision amongst undergraduate students ( $\chi^2 = 11.7, p < 0.01$ ).



#### 4.4 RELIABILITY STATISTICS

**Table 4.5 Reliability of the CDDQ**

Dimension	Number of items	N	Cronbach
CDDQ	36	224	0.82

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scale. Table 4.8 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for the CDDQ. Since the coefficient is above 0.7, it can be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).



#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the most salient findings obtained based on empirical analysis of the data.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the findings obtained and contextualises the research findings based on previous research on career indecision amongst undergraduate students.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research findings stemming from the hypotheses and makes reference to relevant research studies to support the findings of the current study. The objectives of the study are to determine whether or not there are differences in career indecision based on age and gender, to address factors contributing to career indecision, assess whether there is a relationship between access to career counsellors and career indecision, determine the relationship between lack of information and career indecision and to determine how career indecision amongst university students can be reduced. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight limitations of the current research and suggest recommendations for future research based on the outcomes of this study. The information provided in the previous chapters will serve as a basis against which the content of this chapter will be presented and conclusions are drawn based on the findings of the study.

#### **5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

##### **5.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

The sample consisted of two hundred and twenty four ( $n = 224$ ) undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape.

With reference to figures 4.1- 4.10, the majority of the participants were females (n = 148; 66%). Furthermore the majority of the respondents were in the age group 17-20 years (n = 87; 39%). The results reflect that the majority of the respondents were Coloured (n = 141; 63%). Most of the participants were pursuing a B.Com General degree (n = 83; 37%) and the majority of the respondents were enrolled in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies (n = 90; 40%).

The findings further revealed that the majority of the sample comprised of full time students (n = 178; 79%). It was also reported that most of the participants indicated that they did not have access to career counselling (n = 130; 58%). Furthermore, 42% of the sample (n = 96) received career counselling either at school or university, of which 19% (n = 42) who had received career counselling found it to be helpful.

The results indicated that the majority of the students are sure of their module choices or chosen degree programme (n = 168; 75%). The majority of the respondents indicated that curriculum advice would assist them in module choices (n = 178; 79%).

## **5.2.2 INFERENCE RESULTS**

### **5.2.2.1 GENDER AND CAREER INDECISION**

The findings of the current study revealed that there are significant differences in the dimensions **inconsistent information** (t = -2.61,

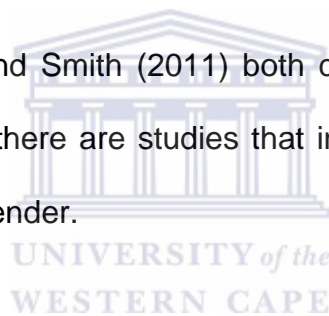
$p < 0.05$ ) and **lack of readiness** ( $t = -0.44$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) based on gender but showed no significant difference **in lack of information** ( $t = -1.50$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) based on gender. Hence, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.

The study of Vahedi, Farrokhi, Mahdavi and Moradi (2012) focused on validating the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire and the applicability of the CDDQ in an Iranian culture. The study aimed to assess the sources of career indecision and examined the difficulties in decision making among undergraduate students. The sample comprised of 511 male and female undergraduate students. Findings revealed that there were significant differences between gender and inconsistent information ( $t = -2.61$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results also indicated that females scored higher for lack of inconsistent information than males. The researchers postulated that their result is inconsistent with society as it expects females to be more career orientated. However, there were no significant gender differences found for lack of readiness ( $t = -0.44$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and lack of information ( $t = -1.50$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

Various studies (Akos, Konold & Niles, 2004; Barnes & Carter 2002; Hampton, 2006; McCoy 2004 & Salami, 2008 all cited in Talib & Aun, 2009) reported no differences in career indecision based on gender. Similarly, Kavas (2011); Kang (2009) and Osipow, Carney and Barak (1976) both cited in Kavas (2011); Smith (1993) cited in Beerall (1997) posit that they also found no differences in career indecision based on gender in their research study.

The results of the current study indicated that there is a significant difference in the dimension lack of readiness based on gender. A study was conducted by Talib and Aun (2009) which focused on examining predictive factors of career indecision amongst 1440 Malaysian undergraduate male and female students. Similarly, the findings showed that there was a significant difference in career readiness based on gender. Moreover, the results ( $t = 5.39, p .001$ ) indicated that females experienced higher levels of career indecision than males which suggested that males are more ready to make career decisions than females.

Creed et al. (2004) and Smith (2011) both cited in Botha (2011) on the other hand state that there are studies that indicate differences in career indecision based on gender.

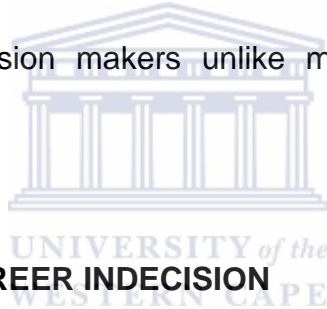


Gordon and Steele (2003) reported on two studies which were conducted separately. The study conducted in 1974 revealed that more males were undecided than females. The second study conducted in 1999 revealed that more females were undecided than males.

Zhou and Santos (2007) conducted a study focussing on cultural and gender differences in career decision making difficulties. The sample comprised of 109 British and 86 Chinese international university students. The results indicated that male students experienced fewer difficulties in career decision making than female students. Research carried out by Patton (2001 & 2002 cited in Talib & Aun, 2009) similarly showed that

females experienced higher levels of career indecision. A study conducted by Gauy et al. (2003) examined whether there were gender differences between males and females and career indecision and found that women perceived less career indecision than men.

Talib and Aun (2009) postulated that female students are more undecided and need more information about careers that interest them and that they experienced high levels of stress when they are required to make career related decisions. Based on the theories of gender differences it is understood that males are more goal orientated and risk takers as opposed to females. Furthermore, the researchers posit that females are not independent decision makers unlike males who are independent decision makers.



#### **5.2.2.2 AGE AND CAREER INDECISION**

Creed et al. (2006) are of the view that career indecision is considered a challenge for both high school pupils and university students. The researchers further delineate that the construct career indecision is associated with many variables, one of which includes age. Naidoo (1998 cited in Taylor, 2007) concurs that age does influence career indecision.

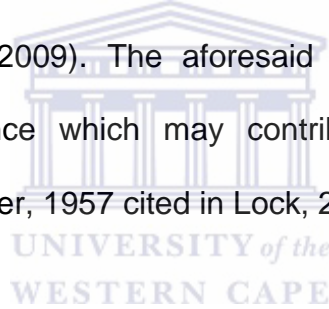
The results of the current study revealed that there is a significant difference in career decision making based on age ( $F = 0.27, p < 0.05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Mau (2001) conducted a study which examined the validity of the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire and its applicability to various cultures. The study also examined the difference in predictors of career indecision and the perceptions of career indecision amongst 1566 American and Taiwanese university students. In the study, age was used as a covariate which allowed the researcher to compare the analyses of the two culture groups. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant difference in career decision making difficulty amongst the two groups of students based on age.

Morrill and Boggs (1990) developed the Career Factors Inventory which assessed the dimensions of career indecision relating to information factors (need for career and self information) and emotional factors (career choice anxiety and general indecisiveness). The Career Factors Inventory was tested on two sample groups, the first group comprised of 409 students from a Western university and the second sample comprised of 331 students from a South Eastern university. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant difference in age amongst the two samples.

According to Gati et al. (1996 cited in Picard, 2012), age may impact the level of career indecision individuals' experience. The study by Feldman (2003) revealed that younger adolescents were more indecisive than older adolescents. Additionally Guerra and Braungart-Rieker (1999) and Peng and Herr (2002) all cited in Kavas (2011) found that younger students experienced more career indecision than older students.

Feldman (2003 cited in Lock, 2009) implied there comes a time in individuals' lives when they are required to make professional decisions, amongst others, which include which job to apply for and which job offer to decline and/or accept. Additionally, individuals may be required to make personal decisions related to leaving home, marriage and financial decisions, all of which complicates the decision making process. Individuals between the age of 18-30 years are normally confronted with the aforementioned decisions; these decisions are made at a time when they do not have experience in decision making and their core personalities have not yet been fully developed (Ployhart, Ryan & Bennett, 1999 cited in Lock, 2009). The aforesaid are examples of situations adolescents' experience which may contribute to them experiencing career indecision (Super, 1957 cited in Lock, 2009).



Gati et al. (1996 cited in Picard, 2012) postulated it may be that younger individuals may not necessarily be able to make decisions as they are simultaneously confronted with numerous decisions which include decisions pertaining to a choice of career field, careers and degree programmes and subject majors, all of which are associated with a lack of information which slows down the decision making process.

A study conducted by Daniels et al. (2011) revealed that age had a minimal impact on career indecision.

### 5.2.2.3 LACK OF INFORMATION AND CAREER INDECISION

The results of the current study revealed a moderate relationship between lack of information and career indecision ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Germeijs and De Boeck (2003) are of the view that there are three elements which are sources of career indecision namely, information factor, valuation factor and outcomes uncertainty factor. The information factor specifically looks at how individuals feel about alternative career options, the valuation factor refers to the valuation problems which are associated with objectives and valuation of the outcomes and lastly, the outcomes factor refers to the uncertainty of outcomes. In their study where they assessed career indecision amongst 174 high school students there was evidence that only the valuation and outcomes factors were proven to be predictors of sources of career indecision and the information factor did not affect career indecision. However, De Boeck (1999 cited by Germeijs & De Boeck, 2003) states that the association of career indecision and the information factor depends on the stages of the decision making process. The researcher further posits that the information factor has an effect on career indecision in the early stages of the career decision making process.

Mylonas et al. (2012) examined the relationship between career decision making difficulties, dysfunctional career thoughts and generalized self efficacy of 260 final year university students in Greece. Their findings indicated that a lack of information was one of the prominent factors that



make a distinction between decided and undecided students. Mylonas et al. (2012) found that students who have work experience scored lower on lack of information in the decision making process and gathering of additional information regarding vocations and self information. The researchers also reported that inconsistent information was found to be associated with career indecision.

Similarly, Gati and Saka (2001 cited in Mylonas et al., 2012) found in their study that career indecision is related to a lack of information. Data was collected from 95 career counsellors and their clients in a study conducted by Gati, Osipow, Krausz and Saka (2000) which assessed the validity of the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that both clients and career counsellors agreed that there were more difficulties associated with readiness for career decision making and inconsistent information than difficulties associated with lack of information.

Beerlall (1997) conducted a study investigating the relationship between educational and vocational indecision amongst first year university students in the Commerce and Sciences faculty at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The sample comprised 404 African, Indian, Coloured and White students. The results of the study revealed that African students were more decided about their careers than their majors, whereas the Indian students were more decided about their majors than their careers. The results also reflected that there were higher levels of educational indecision for African students than for Indian students. It was

hypothesized that it may be due to African students originating from communities where there is a lack of information or insufficient resources available pertaining to career information and Indian students being more informed about degrees and courses than African students. It was further posited that the African students were more decided on their careers because they were not exposed to various options thus they had limited career choices (Beerlall, 1997).

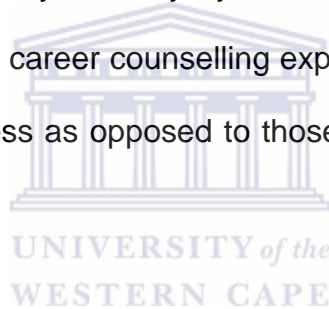
In a study conducted by Mau (2001) amongst 1566 Taiwanese and American university students, it was identified that lack of readiness had a greater impact on career indecision for the American students whereas lack of information had a greater effect on career indecision for Taiwanese students. Mbwale's (2004) research examined the career choice of 101 grade 12 high school learners to determine if they were aware that they were required to make career choices. The results of the study indicated that 33% of the sample of students who participated in the study were undecided about a career choice due to lack of information.

#### **5.2.2.4 CAREER COUNSELLOR AND CAREER INDECISION**

The results of the current study revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between access to a career counsellor and career indecision ( $\chi^2 = 11.7, p < 0.01$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

A study conducted by Taylor (2007) assessed the impact of career guidance counselling on the level of career indecision amongst mature adolescents in the Western Cape. The study was conducted on two


groups (N = 83) where one group of adolescents received career counselling (N = 33) and a second group did not receive career counselling (N = 50). The participants completed the CDDQ on two separate occasions. The results of the study indicated that both groups experienced levels of career indecision at one time however, the level of career indecision remained constant for the adolescents who did not receive career counselling and career indecision levels decreased for those who received career counselling. The findings also revealed that career guidance counsellors assisted students in reducing general lack of information pertaining to information about career options and career decision making. Similarly, a study by Van Reenen (2010) revealed that students who received career counselling experienced less difficulty in the decision making process as opposed to those who did not receive career counselling.



Picard (2012) conducted research which looked at how to reduce academic and career indecision amongst 973 first year college students by assessing the Session d'accueil et d'intégration (SAI), a programme that offers several indecision interventions for counselling and career information. The SAI programme comprised of orientation intervention strategies that looked at inter alia, career information and individual or group counselling. There was evidence that if there were no orientation interventions provided during the first semester then there was an increase in the level of career indecision. This programme was able to fulfil its purpose in terms of assisting the students with their decision making. Findings of the study also revealed that there were improvements

in the students' level of career indecision, lack of self information, lack of methods for decision making and lack of information.

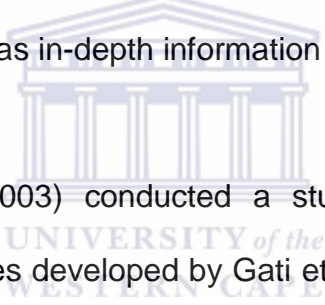
Mbwale (2004) examined the career choice and the awareness of making a career choice amongst 101 adolescents in Namibia. The findings revealed that 38% of the participants agreed that they would not have been able to make career choices without the support of a career guidance counsellor and 44% of the participants stated that there was not enough guidance given to them, which they believed could have assisted them in making career choices. Morgan and Ness (2003) however, caution that students could become too reliant on the opinions, support and feedback of professionals throughout the process of career exploration.



Chuang, Walker and Caine-Bish (2009) conducted a study which evaluated the effect of academic majors on students' career development. The sample comprised of 150 students. The researchers purport that students considered the assistance from professionals but claimed those suggestions made by professionals as their own. The participants who took part in Chuang et al.'s (2009) study stated that they appreciated the opinions of the faculty advisors who assisted them in the career decision making process and acknowledged that the college and department advisors were important and helpful when they needed assistance.

A 25 year longitudinal study was carried out Gordon and Steele (2003) which examined 19800 first year students who entered university undecided. The researchers looked at various activities which students

thought were helpful to them as they explored academic and career options. The findings of the research showed that 20% of the students stated that they found consultation with a counsellor to be helpful, 18% found that participating in field work, taking career planning courses and information sessions with faculty members were helpful and 8% of the students claimed that taking interest tests and talking to professionals in the field of interest were helpful. Two percent found information sessions on employment opportunities helpful but career computerized systems and the internet was the least chosen activity by the students. These activities were included in an orientation programme which was designed to assist students as they made decisions pertaining to their subject majors or career choices as well as in-depth information was presented in class.



Morgan and Ness (2003) conducted a study which investigated the taxonomies of difficulties developed by Gati et al. (1996) on 189 Canadian university students. The researchers posit that the support of student identity development should be part of the university's counselling services as counselling services assist in reducing career decision making difficulties. Degen and Ness (2001 cited in Morgan & Ness, 2003) are of the opinion that career guidance through career exploration workshops increase the students' levels of career decision making self efficacy.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of the current study should be interpreted within the context of its limitations. The study examined career indecision amongst

undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape.

- The current research focused only on undergraduate students registered in one particular faculty and excluded other faculties. Hence, the findings are not generalizable to other faculties or other academic institutions.
- A non-probability sampling method was used based on the method of convenience (voluntary participation) which may have resulted in underrepresentation of certain groups.
- The results reflected that the majority of respondents were predominantly Coloured females hence, it may not represent career indecision experiences of ethnically diverse groups of students.
- A self reported instrument was used which may lead to biased responses as the results were based on the perceptions and insight of the students.
- Another limitation is that a quantitative approach was used to obtain information. Not all options of the questionnaire were completed. Weier (1998) considers incomplete questionnaires to be a disadvantage when conducting research. According to Zutshi, Paris and Creed

(2007) incomplete questionnaires negatively impacts the research results as it may reduce the usability of the study.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS**

- The sample should have included undergraduate students from various faculties and other universities in the Western Cape. This would allow research findings to be more representative of the student population of the Western Cape and it would allow for extensive comparisons to be made.
- It is recommended that a simple random sampling method be used. A probability sampling method allows all participants a chance to be selected (Sekaran, 2001). This sampling method will increase the sample size and increase the generalizability of the research findings.
- The sample could consist of more males and other race groups to account for gender and race bias.
- It is recommended that a qualitative method (focus groups or individual interviews) also be used as this will assist in understanding the difficulties students experience and give insight to the reasons why students experience career indecision.

- It is recommended that the faculty provide career information, subject choice guidance to students in their first year of enrolment, include information in the study curriculum that will advise students on module choices and possible career paths students could pursue.
- As part of the career guidance counselling process, psychometric assessments could be administered to assist students in identifying interests and to ascertain that their majors correspond with their interests (Corkin et al., 2008).
- Career guidance counselling offered at the university should not only assess interests but also students' values and how these correspond to their intended work environments. This is also a suggestion supported by Corkin et al. (2008). Career counsellors should not only assess the difficulties students experience in the decision making process and provide information, but assist students on how to make decisions, especially to those students who experience difficulty in career decision making.
- Career counsellors could offer problem solving training workshops (Mendonca & Siess, 1976 cited in Corkin et al., 2008) as this would assist students to enhance their decision making skills (Hocson, 2012).



- The university could employ innovative ways of promoting career counselling to students, for example, as part of the orientation programme it could include interactive workshops where facilitators present information relevant to career paths and selection of majors. Based on the outcomes of the workshops students could be referred for career counselling.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine career indecision amongst undergraduate university students at an academic institution in the Western Cape. It has been estimated that approximately 50% of students experience career indecision (Gianakos 1999 cited in Creed et al., 2006). The results emanating from this study attest that undergraduate students do experience career indecision. The sample of this study consisted of 61 first year students, 90 second year students and 73 third year students of which 76 were males and 148 were females.

The findings of the current study indicated that:

- i. There is a significant relationship between gender and career indecision amongst undergraduate students.
- ii. There is a significant differences in career indecision based on age.

- iii. There is a moderate relationship between lack of information and career indecision. Research studies indicate that a lack of information does have an effect on career indecision (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2003).
- iv. Lastly, there is a significant relationship between access to career counsellors and career indecision.

All of these findings concur with the findings of other research studies. Furthermore, Mbwale (2004) states that there is literature available attesting that a lack of career guidance counselling could prevent adolescents from making better informed career decisions.

In summary, Creed et al. (2006) purport that career indecision is a normal response to decision making when students are required to make career related choices. Career indecision however, varies from person to person depending on situational factors (Osipow, 1999). Gordon (1981 cited in Creed et al., 2006) posits that career indecision may be reduced by means of relevant interventions that include provision of career related information. Taylor (2007) postulates that career counselling offers assistance to students when they are required to make career related decisions. It has been identified that interventions that only include providing career related information or computer based assessments and exclude the career counselling component are not effective interventions (Whiston, Brecheisen & Stephens, 1993 cited in Lock, 2009).

Career counsellors play a pivotal role in assisting students to make appropriate career decisions. Norris (2008) state that individual counselling is an ideal means of reducing career indecision they experience. Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff (1998 cited in Lock, 2009) purport that career counselling is effective in assisting students who experience career indecision. Hence, academic institutions should not neglect career guidance counselling interventions as career related difficulties impacts the ability of individuals to make informed career decisions.



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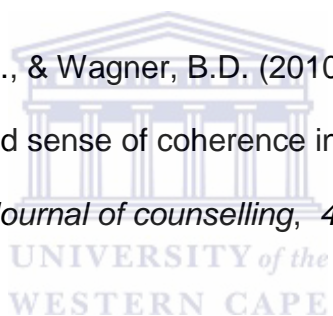
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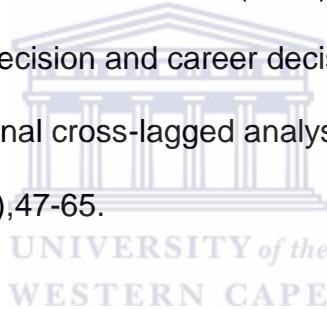
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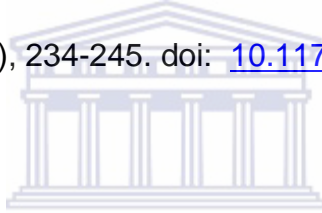
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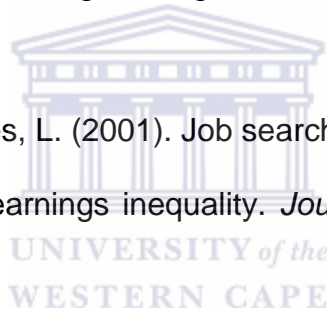
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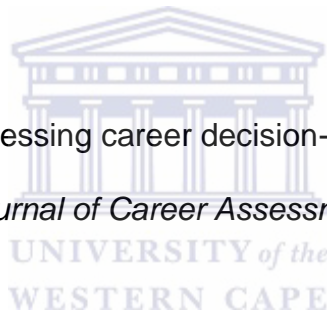
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