

# Chapter 4

## Career Guidance Provision in Secondary Schools: Are Learners Able to Make Informed Career Choices?

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Research has shown that the majority of young people leave school with little knowledge of appropriate careers suitable for their abilities and interests thereby leading to low job satisfaction, and unfulfilled potential among others. Therefore, the objectives of this paper were to investigate learners' abilities with regard to career planning, attaining career information and decision-making. The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and presented in frequency tables. Therefore, through the application of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), the results indicate that the majority of learners agreed to possessing adequate knowledge about career planning, career*

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*decision-making and tertiary institutions. Contrary to popular belief that adolescents are highly influenced by their peers, friends were noted to be the least influential figures in the learners' career decision-making.*

The need to enhance career guidance interventions in secondary schools is a world-wide phenomenon, and the transition from secondary school to tertiary education or the job market requires adolescents to make important decisions regarding career choices (Shin & Kelly, 2015; Stoeber et al., 2016; Taylor, 2007; Tebele et al. 2015). In the South African context, career choices for many high school learners are accidental and rushed decisions (Dabula & Makura, 2013; Sikhwari, 2015). Bholanath (2005) indicates that the majority of young people leave school with vague knowledge of employment opportunities and with little insight as to the most appropriate career direction suitable for their abilities, interests and personality. In this regard, Galliot and Graham (2015) recommend that, "timely career information and guidance should be provided to students and their families in order to allow them to more meaningfully make use of the resources and opportunities available to them with a view toward converting these into real world benefits" (p. 179).

Many youths go into unsuitable careers as a result of ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers, or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate career guidance (Adebowale, 2014; Manuel & Mahendran, 2016). Career guidance, as research shows, should include information on employment prospects, entry qualifications, nature of work, conditions of service, training opportunities and labour market trends (Adebowale, 2014; Makinde & Alao, 1987). Furthermore, according to previous studies, school leavers face many difficulties in making career decisions due to inadequate career information (Galliot & Graham, 2015; Mabula, 2012; Tebele, 2015). In India, according to Manuel and Mahendran (2016), students are inadequately prepared for careers due to lack of knowledge of the graduate labour market. Researchers emphasize that successful career services provision to learners in schools should involve career programs comprising the use of mass media, books, internet, occupational flyers, career exhibitions and career workshops, among others (Aspden et al., 2015; Hill & Nathan, 2006; Mabula, 2012). These authors further state that learners need to understand what exists in the world of work so that they can examine different career options available and decide their relevance to their interests and personal characteristics. According to Bholanath (2004), learners should reach the level of maturity where they are able to acquire specific information on career options in order to identify their interests, abilities and aptitudes and use this information in course selection and career choice.

Intervention influencers such as the school are significant in empowering and affecting learners' choice; schools should, therefore, be available to these learners in terms of addressing career guidance (Watermeyer et al. 2016).

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