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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to establish the factors that influence the career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. This chapter presents the problem and its context. Issues to be discussed under this chapter are background to the study, statement of the problem, sub-research questions, objectives and significance of the study. Theoretical framework, assumptions, limitations of the study, delimitations and definition of terms are also discussed in this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The major part of people's life is spent in occupational activities and these pursuits do more than simply provide income for livelihood (Bandura, 2002:279). There is a widespread agreement that the high school years are crucial for adolescents to become prepared for transition from school to work or college (Amoah, Kwofie & Kwofie, 2015:57; Ombaba, Keraro, Sindabi & Asiengo, 2014: 921; Rowland, 2004:1). Secondary school years present the transition from the cooperatively sheltered life of the primary school to the freedom and responsibility of either tertiary education or employment (Watts & Kidd, 2000:488; Maluwa-Banda, 1998:294). Career guidance is widely accepted as a powerful and effective method of bridging the gap between education and the world of work (Ibrahim, Wambiya, Olaka & Raburu, 2014:301; Ajufo, 2013:312). Students will come through high school with knowledge of their preferences and interests because of their interactions with many stakeholders in their environment. Career guidance programmes are therefore intended to help students understand their own potentials and develop them to the full (Ombaba et al., 2014:921; Ajufo, 2013:312; Alika, 2010a:537; Maluwa-Banda, 1998:289).

The process of making a choice is complex and unique for each individual depending on cognitive factors and social structures of the individual's milieu (Braza & Guillo, 2015:78; Durosaro & Adebanke, 2012:111). A career choice is a decision that most human beings make sometime in their lives; it is a decision that should be carefully considered since it can affect the rest of a person's life (Eyo, 2011:328). Therefore, the goal of career guidance and counselling is to allow an individual to explore his or her options (Lazarus & Chinwe, 2011:52).

According to UNESCO (2002:4), career counselling consists of four elements,

a) helping individuals to gain greater self-awareness in areas such as interest, values, abilities and personality style; b) connecting students to resources so that they can become more knowledgeable about jobs and occupations; c) engaging students in the decision making process in order that they can choose a career path that is well suited to their own interests, abilities values and personality style; and d) assisting individuals to be active managers of their career paths (including managing career transitions and balancing various life roles) as well as becoming lifelong learners in the sense of professional development over the life span.

Career guidance comprises a range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development (Watts & Kidd, 2000:488). The goal of guidance and counselling services is to enable each learner in institutions of learning to derive optimal educational benefits to utilise his or her potential (Ibrahim et al., 2014:302; Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010:88). It also instils confidence and positive attitudes, derives fulfilment and inculcates an eagerness for lifelong learning (Ajufo, 2013:313). Countries need citizens who are able to make the best use of their talents and make career choices that will help them to be motivated and productive (Hiebert, 2009:13).

While course selection strongly shapes the choices students have after they leave high schools (Naude, 2014:510), career guidance is aimed at helping students know themselves and is designed to provide specialised help with educational, vocational, emotional and personal social decisions in a complex and changing world (Gbenga & Toyin, 2014:59; Mabula,

2012:255; Mahlangu, 2011:239; Eyo et al., 2010:87; Maluwa-Banda, 1998:288). It considers their suitability for different careers and educational opportunities, explores alternatives that they may not have considered previously and engages in appropriate decision making about their future careers (Ajufo, 2013:31; Hiebert, 2009:8). In Nigeria, career guidance assisted the youth in making the right choices in different subject areas (Omoni, 2013:30). In Malawi, career guidance was introduced with the hope that through counselling, students would be helped to reduce their areas of personal conflict (Maluwa-Banda, 1998:287). Chireshe (2012b:9) noted that countries such as Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe had started career guidance lessons in schools. However, few students are equipped to determine which combination of courses will best prepare them for success after graduation (Naude, 2014:510).

Career related decisions are complicated and have broad and long term consequences that are not always obvious (Hiebert, 2009:13). The context in which career decisions occur is complex and therefore many people require assistance in exploring alternatives and weighing the consequences associated with various options (Hiebert, 2009:13). Gordon (2000:49) cited that there were 190 000 vacant jobs in the United States but employers could not find employees with the right qualifications to do them. He argued that people are being educated for the wrong future. He further explained that few young people imagine themselves working in services, crafts or technical industries even though government predictions were that these sectors would be the leaders in creating new jobs. This implies that students do not get well informed guidance in terms of the job market.

Evidence about the disparity of career guidance services in high schools in the United States has been echoed in a range of national reports. There have been calls for more career guidance services for youths in schools and for school and community cooperation in this process.

Parental involvement is required if the career needs of diverse populations of students are to be met (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004:396). In the same way, parents should be involved in career guidance in African schools.

Higher education is a formal education which leads individuals to their respective professions. It must not be toyed with if the people involved are to perform well and be productive in their professions (Adebowale, 2011:361). The aims of guidance counselling and of higher education are inseparable because guidance counselling is an integral part of education (Ibrahim et al., 2014:301; Adebowale, 2011:362).

The guidance services at the disposal of the counselling psychologist help students in higher institutions to be gainfully employed (Adebowale, 2011:362). To the knowledge of the researcher, most of the studies done in a number of African countries so far have concentrated on guidance and counselling in general, for example, in Zimbabwe, Chireshe (2012a); Chireshe (2012b); Mapfumo, Chireshe and Peresuh (2002); in Nigeria, Omoni (2013); Ajufo (2013); Eyo (2011); Eyo et al. (2010); Lazarus and Chinwe (2011); Petters and Asuquo (2009); Egbochuku and Akpan (2008); in South Africa, Mahlangu (2011); in Malawi, Maluwa-Banda (1998); in Uganda, Senyonyi, Ochieng and Sells (2012) and in Kenya, Nyutu and Gysbers (2008). This study, on the other hand, concentrated on the factors that influence career choices rather than on guidance and counselling.

A few studies on factors affecting career choice were carried out, for example, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) who carried out a similar study in South Africa. In their study, the participants were undergraduate psychology students who had already chosen their careers. Although this study was carried out in a more similar environment in terms of geographical location, the participants' polity and economic challenges are completely different. Sultana and Watts (2006) also carried out a similar study in the Middle East and North Africa which is an Arab

dominated region. The region is characterised by different economic, political and socio-cultural factors which may produce different results if similar studies are carried out in the different regions. In Nigeria, Lazarus and Chinwe's (2011) study concentrated on adolescents with special needs. The present study sought to establish the factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province, Zimbabwe.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The background to the study revealed that high school years are considered critical for adolescents (Amoah et al., 2015:57; Rowland, 2004:1; Maluwa-Banda, 1998:294) because they are a transitional period from school to work. Failure by students to make the right choices may lead to unhappiness and disapproval by society (Maluwa-Banda, 1998:294). As noted in the background to the study, career guidance programmes are intended to help students understand their own potential and to develop it fully (Gbenga & Toyin, 2014:59; Mabula, 2012:255; Alika, 2010b:53; Hiebert, 2009:8; Hodkinson, 1998:306). They are also used to help students develop themselves (Ajufo, 2013:312; Mahlangu, 2011:239; Alika, 2010a:537; Maluwa-Banda, 1998:294), to explore options that assist them to make the right choices (Lazarus & Chinwe, 2011:52; Omoni, 2013:30), to make optimal educational benefits (Eyo et al,, 2010:88) and to instil confidence and a positive attitude (Ajufo, 2013:313). Failure by students to get career guidance at this stage leads to unhappiness (Alika, 2010a:538). Most students pass this stage without having chosen their careers because most of the students are confused and apply for tertiary education without knowledge of what they want to pursue (Manuel & Asuquo, 2009:135). As highlighted in the background to the study, several studies on general career guidance and counselling were carried out in African countries, for example, Chireshe (2012a), Chireshe (2012b) and Mapfumo et al. (2002) in Zimbabwe; Omoni (2013), Ajufo (2013), Eyo (2011), Eyo et al. (2010), Lazarus and Chinwe (2011), Petters and Asuquo (2009), Egbochuku and Akpan (2008) in Nigeria; Mahlangu (2011) in South Africa; Maluwa-Banda (1998) in

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Malawi; Senyonyi, Ochieng and Sells (2012) in Uganda and Nyutu and Gysbers (2008) in Kenya. None of these studies looked at factors that influence career choices. The few African studies that investigated factors influencing career choice are Lazarus and Chinwe (2011) in Nigeria and Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) in South Africa but the participants in these studies were different from the participants of the current study. The present study sought to establish the factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe.

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What factors influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in Midlands Province of Zimbabwe?

1.4.1 Sub research questions

The study was guided by the following sub-research questions:

1.4.1.1 What is the level of family influence on career pathways?

1.4.1.2 What is the impact of gender on career choices?

1.4.1.3 To what extent does the school influence students on career choices?

1.4.1.4 What is the level of peer influence on students' career choices?

1.4.1.5 What strategies can be used to assist students in making appropriate career choices?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

In trying to investigate the factors that influence the choice of career pathways, the study sought to:

1.5.1 investigate the level of family influence on career pathways;

1.5.2 determine the impact of gender on career choices;

1.5.3 establish whether the school environment influences career pathways;

1.5.4 find out whether peers have influence on students' career choices;

1.5.5 develop strategies that may be used to assist students in making appropriate career choices.

1.6 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Several factors motivated the current study. The researcher was a classroom practitioner for several years and his responsibilities included assisting students to choose careers. The researcher is currently a lecturer at a university in Zimbabwe where he interacts with students from different backgrounds. Having been a lecturer in two different universities, he realised that students who enrol at universities did not always have access to career guidance at school. There are students who pursue a certain career despite the shortfall in the number of points required for enrolment in that program. Another group comprises students who are not sure of their career choices and move from one programme to another.

The researcher works in the department of psychology where he teaches a module in guidance and counselling is concerned with the confusion that affects students who change programmes after pursuing a certain programme for a semester or two. This is the reason that prompted him to pursue a study in career guidance. What also motivated the researcher to carry out the study

was his broad knowledge of the problems students face in choosing careers. The researcher carried out the study that investigates factors that influence career choice among high school students in the Midlands Province because it is close to the researcher's province of residence hence its proximity reduced travel expenses.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study may help schools to develop or improve the quality of career guidance and counselling they give to their students by taking into consideration factors that influence the choice of career pathways. School heads and teachers may be made aware of the importance of career guidance in schools and career guidance counsellors in schools stand to benefit from this study as it highlights factors that influence students' career choices. The study may also help national planners of curricula to make informed decisions with regard to career guidance and counselling. The study may also be used as baseline study to encourage other scholars to carry out similar studies in other provinces in Zimbabwe and also in other African countries.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study was informed by Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory and Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory in examining the factors that influence career pathways among high school students. The two theories were chosen because of their relevance to career issues, especially career development. They include both social and cognitive factors while being sensitive to cultural aspects. Students live in a social world where they interact with the environment as they seek guidance towards careers. These theories deal with the cognitive aspects of the students by making them aware of their decisions.

1.8.1 Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory

John Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory, developed in 1979, emphasises the importance of behaviour (actions) and cognition (knowing and thinking) (Sharf, 1997:324). The essence of Krumboltz's view is that certain generic processes, such as learning experiences, affect the career development of all persons regardless of their cultural affiliations (Lent & Worthington, 2000:380) hence the need to explore the factors that influence career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. This theory differs from other theories of career development in that its focus is on teaching people career decision making techniques and how to use such techniques effectively in selecting career alternatives (Ireh, 2000:36). The types of learning experiences that affect an individual are dependent on his or her culture (Lent & Worthington, 2000:380).

Krumboltz identified four factors that play important role in the selection of a specific career: genetic endowment, environmental conditions, learning experiences and task approach skills (Beal, 1998:297; Ireh, 2000:36). According to the Social Learning Theory, genetic endowment refers to those aspects of the individual that are inherited or innate rather than learned. This may set limits on individual career opportunities. Environmental conditions are those conditions that are generally outside the control of the individual and influence skills development and career preferences. According to Krumboltz, learning experiences include a) one's career performances as a result of prior learning experiences; b) individuals' prior learning experiences that eventually influence their career decisions; and c) that individuals' prior learning experiences have a direct effect on their career choices. According to Sharf (1997:330), individuals may make observations about themselves and their environment that they will then use to make career decisions. Observations about the self include capabilities, interests and work values (Ireh, 2000:36). Krumboltz emphasised task approach skills such as goal setting, values clarification, generating alternatives and obtaining occupational

information in career decision making. Ireh (2000:36) explained that the interaction between genetic endowment, environmental conditions and learning experiences lead to the skills required for completing a variety of tasks. The Social Learning Theory by Krumboltz is relevant to this study because it includes environmental factors such as family, the learning environment and gender. Our behaviour is shaped by beliefs about ourselves and how we relate to society (Schonorr & Ware, 2001:249). According to Krumboltz (1991:2), people make assumptions and generalisations about themselves and the world of work based on their limited experiences. In this case, students in high schools have limited experiences to choose an appropriate career hence the need for a counsellor and/or a supportive environment.

In short, Krumboltz's theory of career decision making and development is based on social learning or environmental conditions, genetic influences and learning experiences. People choose their careers based on what they have learned.

1.8.2 Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, purports that contextual variables such as social support, which includes friends, family and relatives, influence the career choice of an individual (Choo, Norsia & Tan, 2012:22). Social persuasion also affects an individual's choice of career (Lent, Brown & Hacket, 2002:36) because there is dialogue between children and their environment. Similarly, Bandura posited that when individuals watch their peers succeeding, they are likely to believe that they can also succeed (Mills, 2009:9). In this career development model, a person's background (or contextual factors) and individual characteristics influence his/her learning experiences and consequently self-efficacy (Tang, Pan & Newmeyer, 2008:285). According to Bandura (1989:1) and Alexander, Seabi and Bischof (2010:497), because of the bi-directionality of influence between behaviour and environmental circumstances, people are both products and producers of their environment.

They affect the nature of their experienced environment through selection and creation of situations. This is in line with the SCT which states that realistic encouragement that leads people to exert greater effort is likely to bring success in career development (Bandura, 1988:285). The researcher found this theory provided the framework to examine the environment that promotes development in students' quests for sustainable careers. The theory recognises both the cognitive and environmental factors although this study concentrates more on environmental factors.

Social Cognitive Theory focuses on several cognitive variables (for example, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals) and on how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and his or her environment (for example, gender, ethnicity, social support and barriers) to shape the course of career development (Lent & Brown, 2000:36). According to Bandura (2002:269), the theory distinguishes three modes of agency: a) personal agency exercised individually; b) proxy agency in which people secure desired outcomes by influencing others to act on their behalf; and c) collective agency in which people act in concert to shape their futures. Students in high schools are influenced by these three modes when they choose careers, among many variables, that they feel are appropriate for them. The environment, which imposes itself on them, also impacts their choice of careers. These are the reasons that this particular theory is used in this study to investigate factors that influence career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, career development is influenced by both objectives and perceived environmental factors (Lent & Worthington, 2000:37). Examples of objective factors include the quality of educational experiences to which a person has been exposed to such as school counselling and the financial support available from family or guardians for pursuing particular training. People live their lives in socio-cultural milieus that differ in their

shared values, customs, social practices and institutional constraints and opportunities (Bandura, 2002:274). This study allowed the researcher to establish whether the above results can be achieved in Zimbabwe using participants from different backgrounds.

The applicability of the SCT to explain career choice behaviour of school students was verified in a similar study by Tang et al. (2008:285) and was therefore deemed suitable for the current study that looked at career choices among high school students. The theory applied to this study because social factors such as peer and family interactions that affect decision making were considered. In addition to career development, the theory has been extended to domains of behaviour such as educational achievement, affective reactions, and organisational and health maintenance (Lent & Brown, 1996:307).

1.9 ASSUMPTIONS

This study was informed by the following assumptions:

1.9.1 Participants of this study would sincerely cooperate and provide detailed information on career pathways.

1.9.2 The need for career guidance and counselling in Zimbabwe will continue.

1.10 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were anticipated in this study:

1. Since the study was only carried out in only one province, the results may not be generalisable to the whole country. The researcher collected data on his own without research assistants.

2. Financial constraints were also anticipated in the current study. Although the researcher received assistance from the bursary, it was not possible to carry out the study at national level.

3. The researcher is a full time employee so time to carry out the study was limited.

1.10.1 Overcoming the limitations

The researcher ensured that the sample was large enough to be generalised in the Midlands Province but generalisability of the results to the whole country cannot be guaranteed. The use of a single province reduced the expenses, such as transport and stationery which the researcher incurred. It also saved time in terms of travelling around the whole country because the researcher concentrated on only one province. The financial constraint was solved by a bursary from UNISA. Despite the researcher being a full time employee, he made use of vacation leave to collect data.

1.11 DELIMITATIONS

The study was carried out in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe focusing on the factors that influence the career pathways among high schools students. Focus was on Forms 4, 5 and 6 in both urban and rural schools and the school counsellors of the selected schools.

1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.12.1 Career

According to Arnold (1997:21), a career is a sequence of employment related positions, roles, actions and experiences. A career defines how one sees oneself in the context of one's social environment, in terms of one's future plans, one's past accomplishments or failures and one's present competences and attributes (Raynor & Entin, 1982:262). UNESCO (2002:4) defined a career as the interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan including both paid and unpaid work. Career is also seen as the progress and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime, especially related to that person's occupations (Oloasebikan & Olusakin,

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2014:44). In this study, the term "career" refers to any type of professional engagement students pursue whether paid or unpaid.

1.12.2 Career guidance

Career guidance is defined as a set of multiple processes, techniques or services designed to assist an individual to understand and to act on self-knowledge and knowledge of opportunities in work, education and leisure and to develop the decision making skills by which to create and manage his or her own career development (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 1996:44). In this study, career guidance refers to services intended to assist people to make informed career decisions

1.12.3 Career counselling

Career counselling is referred to as helping to bring about self-understanding, understanding of the career concerns involved and behavioural options available (Herr et al., 1996:44). In this study, career counselling means a verbal process in which a professional counsellor and counselee are in a dynamic collaborative relationship to solve career problems.

1.12.4 Career Path

According to Herr et al. (1996:44), the term is typically used in business and industry to describe a series of positions available in some occupational or specialised work area, ordinarily connoting possibilities for advancement. In this study, career path was used to denote the way that individuals achieve something or the way that their life develops. The term pathway was used interchangeably with career choice in this study.

1.12.5 Gender

Feldman (2009:349) defined gender as a state of being a male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences rather than biological ones. In this study, gender is defined as a state of being male or female as defined by society.

1.12.6 Family

Berns (2010:77) defined family as two or more persons related by birth, marriage or adoption who reside together. In this study, a family can either be nuclear or extended or the guardians of the student.

1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINES

1.13.1 CHAPTER 1: The Problem and its Context: This chapter looks at the problem and its setting. Under this chapter the following aspects are covered: the background to the study, statement of the problem, sub-research questions, objectives and the significance of the study. Theoretical framework, assumptions, limitations, delimitations and definition of terms are also dealt with in this chapter.

1.13.2 CHAPTER 2: Review of Related Literature: Reviewed literature of career studies are reviewed and compared with the current study. The following topics are comprehensively discussed: family influence on career choice, the role of schools in career pathways, gender impact on career choice and the influence of peers on career choice. Gaps that need filling are identified.

1.13.3 CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology: This chapter discusses research methodologies where the following aspects are dealt with: research design, sampling, instrumentation, procedure, data analysis and ethical issues. Justification of each aspect is done.

1.13.4 CHAPTER 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion: In this chapter, collected data is presented, analysed and discussed. Quantitative data is presented and analysed first followed by the qualitative data.

1.13.5 CHAPTER 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations: Research questions are answered in this chapter. Conclusions follow and thereafter recommendations are made.

1.14 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the problem and spelt out its context, the background to the study and the statement of the problem. Objectives of the study and research questions were also stated. Also covered in this part are the theoretical framework, assumptions of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and definitions of terms. The next chapter discusses review of related literature.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to identify factors that influenced the choice of career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. This chapter examines literature to determine career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. The literature is presented under the sub-headings derived from the researcher's research questions. The sub headings are: family influence and career pathways; the role of schools in career pathways; the impact of gender on career pathways and the influence of peers on career choice. The gaps filled by the current study are highlighted.

2.2 FAMILY INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICES

Research on family influence has increased rapidly during the last couple of years, yet an understanding of family influences on career choices still remains sparse. Much of the research on family influence focus on individual parents' careers, for instance, mothers or fathers influencing children to take up a certain career. This research considers family members' influence on career choices which includes parents, siblings and extended family members.

The first interactions of a child with people takes place within its home among members of its family who include parents, siblings and relatives (Bollu-steve & Sanni, 2013:92). A child is affected by a number of family-related factors such as the marital relationship of the parents, the socio-economic status of the family, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the family (Bollu-steve & Sanni, 2013:92). The family dynamics therefore play a pivotal role in the career readiness of the students.

Several studies bear testimony that parental involvement influences high school students'

career choices, for example, in Romania (Marinas, Igret, Marinas & Prioteasa, 2016:276), in Pakistan (Baloch & Shah, 2014:546; Saleem, Hanan, Saleem & Shamshed, 2014:841; Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014:811), in America (Bates, 2015:69; Walaba & Kiboss, 2013:12), in Albania (Uka, 2015:212), in the Philipines, (Aguado, Laguado & Deligero, 2015:237), in Kenya (Obwoge & Kibor, 2016:478; Egunjobi, Sasilu & Ogunkeye, 2013:301), in Nigeria (Ogunyewo, Afemikhe, Ajio & Olanlesi-alui, 2015:28; Ezeweani & Atomatofa, 2012:79), in Tanzania (Amani, 2016:79) and in South Africa (Fatoki, 2014:671; Mutekwe, Modiba, Maphosa, 2011:140) studies revealed that parents influence the choice of careers among high school students.

In America, Hairstone (2000:2) purported that the career process of young people can be compared to rocks in a rock polisher. All kinds of people grind away at them but parents are the big rocks in the tumbler. Other American studies also reveal that, even if schools had the resources with which to meet young people's career needs, neither teachers nor counsellors can replace the influence parents have on their children (Taylor, Harris & Taylor, 2004:1; Hairstone, 2000:2). Besides parents, other American family members are viewed as influential in their children's career choices (Tillman, 2015:23; Griffin, Hutchins & Meese, 2011:177; Ojeda & Flores, 2008:91; Domene, Shapka & Keating, 2006:154). Similarly, Kracke (2002:20) revealed that German families influence students' career choices. All these studies were carried out in completely different environments from the current study.

Parents influence career choices in a number of ways, for example, parental support and encouragement. A study carried in Kenya reflects that when adolescents require information on topics such as career planning, they consult their parents (Edwards & Quinter, 2011:82). Although the study was similar to the current study in terms of focus and objectives, the study used a qualitative approach which limits the objectivity and generalisability of results. Another

study in Kenya also examined the influence of parental support in their children's careers (Korrir & Wafula, 2012:87) however, the study was carried out to examine the factors that influence the choice of careers in the hospitality industry in Kenya. The current study did not focus on a particular career but careers in general and is carried out in Zimbabwe.

A study was conducted to investigate the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. It was found that supportive parents are important for their children's career decision making and for the success of their careers (Barker, 2010:6; Clutter, 2010:13). Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013:92) established that Nigerian parents influenced students' performance and eventual career choices. Despite the differences in the aims of these studies, they acknowledged the importance of parental support of their children's education and career choices. The current study particularly focused on family influences on career choices.

African studies, for example, in Kenya (Mokoro, Wambiya & Aloka, 2014:1465) and in Nigeria (Abiyo & Eze, 2015:26; Abiola, 2014:231), have highlighted that many of the settings in which children and youth participate are dependent on the choices of their parents. Thus, parents' decisions, choices of where to live, what to provide materially and relationally in the home and how to structure out-of-school time for children, impacts children's development in ways that are meaningful for later success in the world of work (Abiola, 2014:231). Beggs, Bsutham and Taylor (2008:391) refer to "helicopter parents" who have a tendency to intervene in their children's college life from choosing a university to helping them choose individual courses. In this case, parents are seen as inseparable from their children's career choices. This parental/child attachment has been raised in the Social Learning Theory that informs this study when it emphasises the impact of the environment on learners.

Parental education was found to influence children's career choices, for example, Eccles

(2007:668) revealed that, in America, parents' education and occupation were associated with academic achievement. Parental education was referred to as a determining factor in the selection of careers by British students (Dustman, 2004:227). It was revealed by Pfingst (2015:91) in Australia and Abiola (2014:231) in Nigeria that highly educated parents have more resources, both financially and in terms of academic advice, to support their children than poorer parents. Similarly, in Albania (Uka, 2015:212) and in America (Dustman, 2004:227), parental education levels contribute to children's career pathways. An earlier study by Fisher and Padmawidjaja (1999:144) revealed that American parents who were college educated were able to instil in their children the desire to have experiences and accomplishments that would enable them to surpass their parents' educational and occupational levels.

A father's educational level was found to have an effect on the Irish adolescents' career-forming attitudes (O'Shea & Kirrane, 2008:545). The results of O'Shea and Kirrane's (2008) study indicated that the attitude towards managing the career/family interface becomes progressively more positive from the primary level of the father's education through to the postgraduate level. Canadian parents with higher levels of education are more able to provide assistance for their children's educational and career planning (Domene et al., 2006:146). However, Obiyo and Eze (2015:26) disputed the fact that parental education influenced Nigerian children's choice of careers. The current study sought to investigate whether parental education had an influence on children's career choices.

Careers of parents may have an influence on children's career choices. For example, Indian parents' careers were found to be influential on students' choice of careers (Bakshi, Ghandi, Shah & Maru, 2012:13). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasises vicarious learning where individuals learn by observing. By observing learned parents relating with the outside world, students are likely to model such parents. The current study found out whether parents'

careers influenced their children's choices of careers in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

The quality of the relationship between Indian parents and their offspring was considered to influence the younger generation's preferences for their future careers (Kumar, 2016:28). This means that the kind of relationship between the parents and their children has an impact on career choices. This is reflected in America where children who had healthy independence from family during adolescence and young adulthood were more confident in career choices than those who had dependent relationships (Clutter, 2010:12). Aldefer (2004:573) indicated that American adolescents who cannot separate effectively from their families are not free to make choices based on information and their own desires but are more likely to do what their families expect them to do. It appears that parental influence has limits and if these limits are not adhered to, they can affect children's career choices. Neimeyer's (1993:222) results were similar to those of Clutter (2010:12). Neimeyer (1993:222) said that Americans are active agents who individually and collectively co-construct the meaning of their experiential world. Children need help from parents to a certain extent but also need to be given autonomy to explore their world on their own. The assertion above is in line with SCT which asserts that children are the products and the producers of the environment (Alexander et al. 2010:497). The current study sought to investigate whether similar results on parental influence would be obtained.

Parents are seen to influence their children in taking up entrepreneurship as their careers. According to Aslam, Jahan and Rahman (2012:122), Pakistani parents' previous experiences of entrepreneurship in practice, both directly and indirectly through their family background in business, is significantly associated with their attitude regarding an entrepreneurial mind-set. A child could have a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship if his or her parents have their own businesses or are otherwise self-employed but parents who experienced depressing circumstances with their own businesses may force their children not to become entrepreneurs

(Aslam et al., 2012:120). In other words, parents who have done well in business may encourage their children to be entrepreneurs but those parents who struggled in their businesses may not. This is in line with the Social Learning Theory which informs this study which advocates that the learning environment is critical. In this case, the entrepreneurship environment determines whether the children venture into entrepreneurship or not. If the parents failed to achieve a goal in their own careers, that would affect their children's vision in that the parent may discourage the child from taking up that career. Aslam et al.'s (2012) study cited parental influence on entrepreneurship whereas this study focused on career choices in general. The above study did not focus on high school students but children in general. The current study focused on high school students only.

Brody, Stoneman and McCoy (1994:279) purport that Canadian parents' beliefs and values about school can transfer to their children and, in turn, affect the value their children place on learning and eventually on the choice of careers. Parents transmit their own norms and values and belief systems to their children in the hope that the offspring will find them useful in guiding their own decisions and actions. This is referred to as internalisation (Brody et al., 1994:279). The same principle may also apply to parental influence on children's career choices. In addition, parental nurturing motivates children to please their parents and meet expectations (Ellefsen & Beran, 2007:178). Similarly, in Hong Kong, students value the opinions of their parents (Law & Yeun, 2011:61). This implies that parents can foster interest in certain careers in their children from childhood. The current study sought to ascertain the extent to which parental values influence children's career choices.

According to Bardick, Berns, Magnusson and Witko (2004:106), Canadian adolescents tend to appreciate their parents' opinions more than any other source for answers to career related issues. Many parents of Canadian adolescents are in the position to influence their children's

career development because they have observed their children's development, know their interests and strengths and have developed a trusting relationship with them (Bardick et al., 2004:106). Comparatively, in Singapore, it was revealed that parental involvement had a significant influence on the selection of nursing careers (Ching & Keith, 2011:6). The Singaporean study agrees with an earlier study in America which purports that mothers' parenting techniques and the nature of their emotional bond with their teenagers may determine whether the adolescents participate in the decision making process (Brody et al., 1994:279). Furthermore, American families were found to be sources of emotional, material, financial and networking support for their children regarding career decision making (Duffy & Dik, 2009:33; Borgen & Hiebert, 2006:369). This means that the bond between the mother and the child back dated to infancy continues to persist into adolescence, influencing the choice of careers. This is in line with Hashim and Embong (2015:83) who revealed that Malaysian parents, especially mothers, are influential in the career choices of secondary school students. The present study sought to establish if the Canadian, American, Singaporean and Malaysian experiences described above were also applicable to Zimbabwe.

American parents help their children through the expectations they have for their children's post-secondary education and through home based involvement in their children' careers (Trusty, Ng & Watts, 2005:66). Home based involvement is the degree to which parents discuss educational and career related matters with their children. It could be the assistance parents give to their children through homework and educational tours which are biased towards the parents' expectations of their children as they eventually choose their careers. Similarly, Duffy and Dik (2009:33) opined that the power and influence of a family on initial career decisions and subsequent job choices is critical in helping children with career concerns. Parents provide not only a source of identification for their children's career development but also guide them to formulate feelings about occupations (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999:145). The present study

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was aimed at establishing whether Zimbabwean parents' involvement in home based activities influenced children's career choices.

Students may learn from models in their world whether in urban or rural areas. The immediate world of children is the family. Models could come in the form of family members or other relatives (Braza & Guillo, 2015:83; Ogunyewo et al., 2015:28; Egunjobi et al., 2013:302). This is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory which informs this study that advocates the importance of role models and vicarious learning. Role models in the family may include parents, older siblings and extended members of the family such as uncles, aunts and cousins. Therefore, students may pursue careers as a result of certain individuals in the family who were role models. In Zimbabwe, Mapfumo et al. (2002:163) stated that relatives were considered to be the main influence in career choices of children in their vicinity.

Mapfumo et al.'s (2002) study also revealed that societies perpetuate certain behaviours among male and female children through the way they are brought up. Mapfumo et al.'s study did not specify the factors that influence career choices but revealed that the family (which is one of the factors in this study) has an important role to play. The study looked at career perceptions and visions of boys and girls in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. The current study aimed at establishing whether parents act as role models as revealed above and influence students' choice of careers.

Bartle-Haring, Yaunkin and Day (2012:203) argued that there are other contextual factors beyond schools that are related to school engagement such as parental involvement, family routines, family connectedness, parenting practices and family social support including parental expectations for academic achievement. If families are not well coordinated, the children may not be motivated by them in their choices of careers. It is not only the parents and other family members who influence children to choose careers but other family dynamics such

as family cohesion and conflicts within families. Although it is not the purpose of this study to reveal these dynamics, they may influence families in assisting their children in choosing their careers.

Families do not always influence students' choice of careers. For instance, in South Africa, Mashinge and Oduntan (2011:25) and Dodge and Welderndael (2014:46) found that families do not influence career choices. Ma and Yeh (2010:24) established that Chinese-American youths' parental values were not a significant predictor of career aspirations, plans and vocational outcome expectations. Their study also reflected that, as children grow older, the desire to find fulfilment in a career versus pleasing the family can influence adolescents' decisions about their career choices. The family's interference with their children's career decisions may have a negative influence on the career choices in later stages. Similarly, in Nigeria, parents and relatives played insignificant roles in the choice of library and information science careers (Oloasebikan & Olusakin, 2014:55). Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) also revealed that Nigerian parents did influence their children's nursing careers. Although Egunjobi et al.'s study could be affected by bias as the researcher used purposive sampling and also focused on a particular career, these revelations are still relevant. The downside of non-probability sampling techniques in general and purposive sampling in particular is that an unknown proportion of the entire population will not be sampled. The sample may or may not represent the entire population accurately therefore the results of the research cannot be generalised. Over and above purposive sampling, Egunjobi et al.'s study used participants from nursing colleges and only focused on nursing careers which makes it different from the current study which looks at secondary school students' career choices. Moreover, the current study used stratified random sampling which gives it an edge and also looked at careers in general not a specific career as did Egunjobi et al.'s study. Stratified random sampling captures key population characteristics in the sample therefore the results can be generalised.

The present study sought to establish whether, in Zimbabwe, similar results that family has an insignificant influence on children's career choice is correct. The next section discusses the influence of schools on students' career choices.

2.3 SCHOOL INFLUENCE AND CAREER CHOICE

Career guidance is offered at institutions of learning such as schools, colleges and universities among others. High schools are a transition to higher institutions of learning and the world of work so they have a critical role in assisting students choose careers (Baloch & Shah, 2014:547). If students have too many choices of careers or have not made a decision on which career to take, school career guidance is helpful in selecting their study paths and in identifying their potential strengths to enhance their competitiveness for positions (Dodge & Welderndael, 2014; Sun & Yuen, 2012:204). Krumboltz's theory of Social Learning Theory of career development, which informs this study, emphasises teaching people career development techniques so that they can give career guidance in schools. Similarly Lapan, Tucker, Kim and Fosciulek (2003:329) stated that the transition from high school to university or the world of work has been understood as one of the most difficult developmental challenges confronting adolescents and that schools play a pivotal role in guiding the students towards a career. The current study sought to find out whether career guidance offered in schools influences students' career choices.

Edwards and Quinter (2011:85) emphasised the influence of Kenyan schools in students' choices of careers when they argue that it is in schools where students learn about and explore various careers before they make career choices. Korrir and Wafula's (2012:87) study highlighted the influence of the school on choosing a career. It investigated the factors that influence the choice of hospitality careers at Moi University. They concluded that Kenyan students' interest in this career could have been developed at high school. The study was carried

out at a university and looked at a particular career. The current study does not look at a particular career but careers in general. Also, the participants in Korrir and Wafula's study are different from the current study which looks at high school students in Zimbabwe. Similarly, Faiter and Faiter (2013:13) emphasised that American students were influenced at high school to follow STEM subjects which eventually prepare students for careers that are scientific in nature.

Decision making is an important tool in career choice. This is in line with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory which informs this study that emphasises career decisions. According to Ferreira and Lima (2010:298), decision making is a complex process which can often be difficult and confusing for many Spaniards. In general, career guidance interventions in American schools are concerned, not with telling students what to do, but with helping them acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them make better career choices and transitions hence ameliorating the problem of career decisions (Watts & Sultana, 2004:111). Similarly, Hansen (2006:34) stated that, in Switzerland, school career exploration and career decision-making activities can be used to broaden students' awareness of their interests and abilities as well as the career opportunities that exist. Decision making is one of the basic tenets of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which emphasises self-efficacy. According to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy entails the belief in one's capability to succeed on a given task. Hence, students are likely to choose careers based on whether they have the capacity to do well in their chosen careers. If career guidance enhances the acquisition of self-efficacy, it was critical for the current study to establish its influence in Zimbabwe.

Kimiti and Mwova (2012:366) reported that Kenyan school career guidance positively influenced career decision-making, understanding of careers and career related adjustments about students' career choices. Moreover, the study revealed that when students are not guided

in their choice of careers, they do not know what is good for them or even what they want. Hence, a lack of career guidance may cause students to make wrong choices and enrol for studies they know little or nothing about (Kimiti & Mwova, 2012:366). This implies that schools play a pivotal role in preparing students for future careers. Similarly, a South African study by Shumba and Naong (2012:171) found that career choices are decided long before the learners come to universities. The majority of respondents in the above South African study attributed their career choices at universities to subject choices they made whilst they were still in schools.

It is the role of the school from early adolescence, to assist learners to find meaning in their present and future lives (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:124). American school engagement involves behavioural as well as emotional components that play a mediational role in the association between developmental assets such as careers and academic competence (Li, Lerner & Lerner, 2010:811). According to Jackson and Nutini (2002:58), the goal of American school counselling is not to determine a delimited career choice but rather to expand students' learning about potential career and educational interests, abilities, beliefs and options.

Nigerian school youths who are ignorant of the nature and requirements of various occupations can find the issue of selecting an occupation difficult and complex (Petters & Asuquo, 2009:211). As such, schools engage a variety of activities to help students cope with the complexity of career choices. Hence, career guidance was seen in Nigeria as enabling guidance counsellors to assist individuals to identify and learn the skills for more effective planning and choosing jobs, in making effective transitions and adjustments to work and in managing their own careers and career transitions effectively (Lazarus & Chinwe, 2011:58). The current study sought to establish the extent to which Zimbabwean school career guidance and counselling services influence the choice of careers among high school students.

Mghweno, Mghweno and Baguma (2014:13) established that Tanzanian school career guidance teachers play a key role in preparing students to successfully proceed to the next level, whether for further education or a job. The same study also revealed that access to guidance and counselling services influence students' attitude towards studies, which will consequently influence their career choices (Mghweno et al., 2014:13). The current study sought to establish whether the above results could be obtained in Zimbabwe.

Due to the difficulties encountered in making career choices in schools, many students in Israel seek guidance from career guidance teachers (Gati, Amir & Landman, 2010:393). This is in line with Krumboltz's (1996:58) Social Learning Theory, one of the theories informing this study, which purports that career guidance teachers could take a proactive stand in encouraging clients to try out new activities to determine whether new interests can be identified. A Nigerian study confirmed the role of school career guidance teachers when it established that school career guidance counselling has an effective and significant influence in increasing the students' career awareness when compared to a group with no career counselling (Eyo, 2011:338). The major finding of Eyo's study was that students who are exposed to career guidance are more equipped with career seeking techniques when compared to those who did not get the guidance. Hence, the more in-depth the counselling the students receive, the more proactive they become.

Career guidance teachers in schools have an important role in advocating for broad based career plans that focus on the student's interests and abilities and that will increase future career options (Mghweno et al., 2014:13). Similarly, Zayas and McGuigan (2006:1529) emphasised the role of career guidance teachers when they stated that American school guidance teachers are uniquely positioned to stimulate students' interest in the health professions. In the same American study, it was revealed that many of the focus group participants felt career guidance teachers were largely helpful.

Bardick et al. (2004:114) revealed that a proactive career counselling approach that benefits Canadian students would include building trusting relationships with students, encouraging them to closely examine and explore their occupational interests, providing students with information about the stages of decision making involved in career planning and guiding them in their search for information about careers. This could build trust and legitimacy in the counsellor making him or her influential in the students' career choices. Bardick et al. (2004:114) further purported that counsellors who wish to become more influential in students career planning may need to become more actively involved in students' everyday lives. Career guidance is not only confined to the classroom but could be extended to the external world. The current study sought to establish whether counselling in schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe played a pivotal role in students' career choices.

In developed countries, career guidance is not solely the duty of school counsellors and teachers but also includes independent counsellors. Such counselling may require a fee which could deter some students from getting that help. However, Balin and Hirschi (2010:174) advocate that the students who do not go to independent counsellors to seek help may benefit from classroom career guidance, where they may have the chance to build relationships with school counsellors and become more comfortable in seeking one-to-one interactions later in the process. School career counselling may be the answer for those who may have problems with attaining professional guidance offered elsewhere. Balin and Hirschi (2010:174) argued that Swiss school career guidance or group work activities can help students develop career adaptability. School career guidance was seen as influential in preparing Kenyan students for their career choices (Owino & Odundo, 2016:2240; Edwards & Quinter, 2011:85). The present study sought to find out whether career guidance in Zimbabwean schools influenced students' career choices.

Balin and Hirschi's (2010) study was carried out in the German speaking region of Switzerland. They concluded that Swiss students should work on more career guidance activities that will provide awareness, comfort and skills for career exploratory behaviours. This, they believed, would develop career adaptability, such as learning about the educational and vocational system and transitions, the actual opportunities and barriers of the system and individuals, decision-making skills and the importance of seeking help from professionals (Balin & Hirschi, 2010:165). It is notable that the participants in this study were predominantly white Europeans however the current study is a clear effort to find how Africans, particularly Zimbabweans, are influenced by career guidance in schools. Balin and Hirschi's results could have been affected by other variables that affect foreigners. The current study used Zimbabwean citizens in their country.

Teachers were found to influence students' choice of careers. Several studies revealed the influence of teachers on a variety of careers, for example, in Pakistan (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014:811), in America (Faiter & Faiter, 2013:13), in the Philippines (Aguado et al., 2015:237) and in Nigeria (Gbenga & Toyin, 2014:59). High school teachers were found to guide students toward IT careers (McInerney, Didonato, Giagnacova & O'Donnell, 2008:46). In addition, McInerney et al. (2008:47) stated that prior experience with technology in high school or university directs students towards IT careers.

Walters (2010:222) identified the characteristics of teachers that Australian learners identified as supportive of their career pathways. They include: connecting pedagogical practices with students' interests, being passionate about their subject matter, having good content knowledge, making learning experiences relevant, setting high expectations of students, being a good explainer of complex ideas and being a good classroom manager. This is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory which emphasises the development of career guidance for

learners. In other words, the day-to-day activities of the teacher are crucial in motivating students towards a career. The participants of Walters' study were gifted students in their first year at university. In the current study, not only gifted students were considered but mixed ability students were considered to establish whether teachers influenced students' career choices in Zimbabwe.

The Yorkshire Times (2012:2) revealed that at Tong High School in England, staff training and development put teachers at the forefront as they discovered that teachers were best placed to inspire the students' career choices and bring out the best in the students. The Yorkshire Times discovered that teachers at their schools had an influence over respondents' career choices. The same study also confirmed that enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed teachers lead young people towards careers. Bright, Pryor, Wilkenfeld and Earl (2005:31) reiterated the importance of teachers in career guidance when they purport that teachers were second most important grouping in helping students choose their careers. The poll by The Yorkshire Times (2012:2) which examined the reasons why respondents picked a certain job, found that 50 percent of the participants made the decision as a result of a particular teacher. According to Kniveton (2004:47), British school teachers can identify aptitudes and abilities and encourage students to take certain subject options, take part in work experience or employment visits. The current study sought to ascertain whether Zimbabwean school teachers influenced students' career choices in high schools.

School subjects were found to play a major role in influencing students to prefer certain careers over others. Studies have revealed the influence of school subjects on students' choices of careers. For instance, in Pakistan (Naz, Saeed, Khan, Sheik & Khan, 2014:1194), and in America (Faiter & Faiter, 2013:13), school subjects were found to influence students in choosing careers. The quality of teaching, student participation in school activities, school

practices and policies and learning materials for the students were found to impact on career choices among learners (Shumba & Naong, 2012:171). Schools therefore guide students towards certain careers by exposing them to a variety of activities. The current study sought to establish the extent to which Zimbabwean schools influence career choices among high school students.

Mexican American high school students identified school mentors as helpful when they provide verbal encouragement for students' career goals or when the mentors were available for support as students made decisions about their future careers (Walaba & Kiboss, 2013:12; Durosaro & Nohu, 2012:144; Flores & Obasi, 2005:160). Flores and Obasi (2005:147) further reiterated the importance of a mentoring relationship which could advance learners' career development if mentors provide the requisite skills to gain entry into and progress in a profession. Mentors can assist mentees in identifying the necessary resources to achieve career goals (Flores & Obasi, 2005:147). Similarly, Canadian school mentors, in the form of teachers, career guidance teachers and sometimes school heads, were found to be influential in students' career development (Fried & MacCleave, 2009:495). Furthermore, mentors can provide students with an introductory network of professionals in the field and by introducing students to colleges (Flores & Obasi, 2005:147). American teachers who act as mentors in schools constitute an individual social support network (Zayas & McGuigan, 2006:1529; Flores & Obasi, 2005:147). Several other studies, for example, in the Philippines (Aguado et al., 2015:237), in Pakistan (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014:811), in Nigeria (Ogunyewo et al., 2015:28), in Kenya (Migunde, Agak & Odiwuor, 2012:235) and in South Africa (Shumba & Naong, 2012:171) have confirmed the influence of mentors on students' choices of careers. The current study sought to establish whether school mentors influence students' choices of careers.

Mexican American high school students most often identify having role models in schools who lead by example, who are supportive and provide direct career guidance to students as influential in their career decision making (Koech, Bitok, Rutto, Koech, Okoth, Korrir & Ngala, 2016:61). Similarly, in a study in America, high school students' job satisfaction and career decisions were related to positive experiences with their role models, such as school guidance counsellors, indicating that visiting the school guidance office was effective in achieving job satisfaction (Rowland, 2004:10). It is also believed that role models help students develop educational and career interests that they might not have considered. The above assertions highlight the need of all stakeholders in career guidance in schools in assisting students to make correct career decisions. This is in line with the Social Cognitive Theory which informs this study that advocates that role models inspire learners. The present study sought to find out whether role models influence students' choices of careers.

Field trips and school career days were found to have a significant influence on students' choices of careers. For example, in the United Kingdom, field trips were found to have an impact on students' choices of careers (Higgins, Dewhurst & Walkins, 2012:175). Similar studies in America also found that field trips and career days influence students' career choices (Nabors, Edwards & Murray, 2006:666; Behrandt & Frankline, 2014:13), in Czechoslovakia (Prokop, Tuncer & Kvasnicak, 2007:253). Similar findings were obtained in Pakistan (Shakil, Faizi & Hafeez, 2011:14), in Ireland (Higgins et al., 2012:224) and in Ghana (Amoah et al., 2015:64) where the importance of field trips in influencing students' choices of careers was revealed. The current study sought to establish whether Zimbabwean school field trips and career days influenced students' career choices.

The type of school also has a significant influence on the careers chosen by students. Studies in the Bahamas (Rowland, 2004:9) and in Kenya (Chemeli, 2013:56) showed that the type of

school had a bearing on choices of careers. Schools are categorised differently all over the world. There are government schools, mission schools, private schools, boarding and day schools. These schools may have different cultures which influence the careers that are preferred by students. In the current study, different types of Zimbabwean schools, which included boarding, day, urban, rural and farm schools, were considered.

Another important aspect about schools with regard to career choices was the geographical location of the school (Roy, 2016:5; Fizer, 2013:33; Perna, Rowan-Kenyon, Thomas, Bell, Anerson & Chunyan, 2008:140). The constraints on providing career counselling vary across schools based on the characteristics of the students the school serves and the location of schools, in particular, district or state (Perna et al., 2008:140). The current study was carried out in Zimbabwe and included both rural and urban high schools and intended to establish whether the location of the school influenced students' career choices. In contrast, Ko, Lee, Leung, Vikis and Yoshida (2007:486) established that geographical location of the school has no influence on British students' career choices. The reason for these contrasting results could be the participants that were used in the study. The participants in Ko et al.'s (2007) study were foreigners living in Britain.

The next section discusses the influence of gender on career choice.

2.4 GENDER INFLUENCE AND CAREER CHOICE

Gender is viewed as the division of people into two categories, men and women, based on their biological differences (Jamabo, Enebeli & Ester, 2012:91). Several studies, for example, in America (Tang et al., 2008:191; Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999:148; Ahuja, Ogan, Herring & Robinson, 2006:20), in Pakistan (Abbasi & Sarwat, 2014:841) in the Philippines (Morales, Avila & Espinosa, 2016:77), in South Africa (Mwamwenda, 2013:14; Mudhovozi & Chireshe, 2012:174), in Nigeria (Ehigbor, & Akinlosotu, 2016:207; Egunjobi et al., 2013:300; Kikechi,

Owano, Ayado & Ejakait, 2013:390; Durosaro & Adebanke 2012:12; Igbinedion, 2011:335), in Kenya (Simiyu, 2015:88; Migunde et al., 2012:49) and in Zimbabwe (Mutekwe et al., 2011:140) have shown the influence of gender in career decision making.

Since gender is used to distinguish between males and females, it implies that there are a number of attributes that go with gender as defined by society. According to Jamabo et al. (2012:91), through interactions with caretakers, socialisation in childhood, peer pressure in adolescence, and gendered work and family roles, men and women are socially constructed to be different in behaviour, attitude and emotions. This also influences the careers they choose. There are also different roles for men and women. Corrigall and Konrad (2007:847) state that traditional individuals in American believe that a woman's role is to be a homemaker and that a man's role is a breadwinner. However, there is a paradigm shift as more American egalitarian individuals believe that women should share in financial support of the family and that men should participate in childcare and other traditionally feminine aspects of household labour (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007:847). In other words, women have the capacity to engage in male-dominated careers and men engage in what are perceived as women's jobs as defined by the society. The current study sought to establish whether the above mentioned paradigm shift also affected the girls and boys in Zimbabwe with regard to careers traditionally dominated by men or by women.

The influence of gender in career choices has been documented in many studies. In Nigeria, female students go for careers that are feminist in nature while their male counterparts opt for careers that are masculine in nature (Durosaro & Adebanke, 2012:12; Akinbode & Fagbohungbe, 2011:4033). In China, Chow and Ngo (2002:16) state that gender differences are attributed to sex role socialisation which creates a clear distinction between sex roles, prejudice and discrimination which affect the status of women in the economy. Kenyan females

choose careers that correspond with their traditional gender roles and males also choose careers that match those of their traditional gender roles (Migunde et al., 2012:494).

Griffin et al. (2011:177) established that, in America, when gender beliefs are salient they shape behaviour most powerfully by affecting people's sense of what others expect of them. Similarly, Ahuja et al. (2006:20) revealed that gender influences behaviours and preferences across a variety of contexts. Ahuja et al.'s study further explained that male students use computers earlier in life especially to play computer games. The current study sought to establish if similar results could be found in Zimbabwe.

It was also established in Nigeria that the use of computers and internet has the potential to equip students with career information that would give male students an edge over their female counterparts (Durosaro & Adebanke, 2012:112). On the other hand, an Australian study by Miliszewska and Sztendur (2010:257) indicated a positive attitude towards computers among girls. The participants were of different origins, among them Europeans, Asians, Australians and Africans at different high schools in Melbourne Australian. The current study sought to establish whether there is gender disparity in computer and ICT careers among high school students in Zimbabwe.

Igbinedion (2011:332) revealed that Nigerian male students perceived parental influence as a factor that influenced their choice of a secretarial career, which is more inclined towards female students. Similarly, Agarwala (2008:362) established that Indian fathers were found to be the most significant influence in the career choices of Indian boys and girls in management. The same study further revealed that mothers also influenced girls. The Indian study is consistent with Paa and McWhirter (2000:40) who reported that American girls consistently reported more positive influences from same sex parents, friends and teachers. Although the results for boys perceived positive influences from their fathers, they also reported an equal and

occasionally higher percentage of positive influences from their mothers (Paa & McWhirter, 2000:36). The present study sought to establish if the above was applicable in Zimbabwe.

In the Netherlands, technical and natural sciences are still male dominated despite efforts to encourage females to study them (Klapwijk & Rommes, 2009:404). In spite of the fact that, in the Netherlands, girls have wide ranging professional values and form a heterogeneous group, the masculine image remains an important and persistent obstacle. Like in many other countries, the belief that girls do not like to work with physical objects is also quite pervasive in the Netherlands (Klapwijk & Rommes, 2009:404). Similarly, male and female American medical students differed in the value they placed on comprehensive patient care when selecting careers (Behrend, Thompson, Meade, Grayson & Newton, 2007:4).

Female students in America were more likely than their male counterparts to choose occupations that involve helping others and expressing themselves while, in contrast, boys were more interested in having higher self-efficacy and were more likely to choose occupations involving data or realistic, investigative, enterprising and conventional occupations (Griffin et al., 2011:177; Tang et al., 2008:285-295). Jamabo et al. (2012:92) also purport that, generally, Nigerian girls are interested in literacy, clerical, artistic, musical and social activities while boys indicated preferences for outdoor, mechanical, computational, business and industrial professions. The belief that boys and girls choose careers based on gender lines is built during adolescence when gender roles manifest (Klapwijk & Rommes, 2009:405). For girls, the gender bias may result in an aversion to all technical occupations since they represent masculinity. Similarly, English boys tend to choose more traditionally male subjects and girls more traditionally female subjects which are likely to influence their choices of gender based careers (Favara, 2012:30). This is in line with the Social Learning Theory, which informs this study, which emphasises that students (boys and girls) will choose careers that are dictated by

their social interaction which is the environment. The present study sought to establish whether similar results found in America, Netherlands and Nigeria could be manifested in Zimbabwe.

A survey on Public Relations students in America indicated that college students categorise public relations specialties, in terms of those areas and qualities they seek in their own careers based on gender (Andsager & Hust, 2005:89). Although the study above was carried out at only one university in America, it established that the public relations profession is feminine in nature. Another study in America indicated that men and women in the medical profession were different in their areas of speciality where women place more value on comprehensive patient care than their male counterparts (Behrend et al., 2007:4). This is also in line with Corrigall and Konrad (2007:847) who purport that women and men in America vary in their individual views concerning appropriate roles and behaviours for the sexes in the paid work and family domains. This implies that gender plays a pivotal role in career choice at different levels in life. However, the present study sought to establish if girls in Zimbabwe choose different careers than boys.

Furthermore, Andsager and Hust (2005:89) purported that if American professionals and students perceive that specialties involving mathematics, science and physical exertion are gendered male, that perception is likely to be based on differential educational expectations. Students identified female-oriented specialty areas as more ethical and more caring. Such areas have significantly lower salaries than the male-oriented areas, which did not fare well in terms of ethics and caring. Similarly, Mutekwe et al. (2011:138) established a distinction between Zimbabwean male and female students in the choice of subjects where males chose the sciences and females chose the arts. Such choices would influence students to pursue different careers as guided by the subjects they had done. The above studies indicate gender disparity among students. The present study sought to establish whether gender influenced career choices as

indicated above. Since the studies were carried to establish how gender influences career choices on certain types of careers, they cannot be generalised to other careers hence the need to carry out a study that does not pay attention to a particular career.

Klapwijk and Rommes (2009:405) argue that gender is still a hindrance to career choices. Similarly, Balin and Hirschi (2010:172) indicated that Swiss boys were less likely to seek career guidance and counselling as compared to their female counterparts. This implies that their line of thinking has already been established due presumably to socialisation resulting in them choosing careers that are in line with their gender. Eyo et al. (2010:96) also stated that gender has a significant influence on the attitudes of the students towards guidance and counselling services. Eyo et al. (2010) further revealed that gender difference in the students' attitudes gave a mean score of 22.00 for female and a lower mean score of 19.00 for male. The study also concluded that females responded favourably to career guidance services when compared to boys. Similarly, Dellana and Snyder (2004:37) revealed that American female students were more satisfied than male students with career counselling they received. However, in the same study, females, more than males, reported feelings of uneasiness when talking with guidance counsellors and males reported, more often than females, that guidance counsellors were not well informed in terms of careers. This implies that gender affected the way students responded to career counselling. A later American study by Griffin et al. (2011:177) also purported that, unlike male students, female students reported that school counsellors and college resource materials were helpful. In the same study, female students were more likely than male students to report using various sources for information about their educational and occupational aspirations. The present study sought to establish if girls in Zimbabwe are more satisfied than boys with career counselling in schools and whether career counselling benefited both male and female students the same way.

Eyo (2011:337) revealed that gender has a significant influence on the occupation preference among counselled and uncounselled Nigerian students. Whether the student received counselling or not, the gender influence continues to manifest in students. Mapfumo, et al. (2002:161) explained that there is a difference between jobs expected and preferred by both Zimbabwean girls and boys after school. The Zimbabwean study by Mapfumo et al. was carried out in Masvingo and Manicaland Provinces while the current study was carried in the Midlands Province. Furthermore, Mapfumo et al.'s (2002) study in Zimbabwe was carried out more than ten years ago. This meant that the current study was required to establish whether similar results could be found.

Klapwijk and Rommes (2009: 405) revealed that gender segregation was much more distinctive in professions for which Dutch preparatory and secondary vocational education provides. Chemeli (2013:352) is in agreement and indicated that separating Kenyan students by sex has an influence on how students choose their careers. The Kenyan study shows that, when the sexes are separated in school, the aspirations are different, but when they are together in school, both boys and girls seem to influence each other and choose careers that they would not have chosen if they were separated.

Although many studies have highlighted the influence of gender on career choices, there are other studies that have different perspectives, for example, Ojeda and Flores (2008:91), and Gati and Saka (2001:339) stated that male and female students in America perceived similar patterns of influence on their current career expectations. Other studies, such as Malubay, Mercado and Emeliza (2015:37) in the Philippines and Uka (2015:212) in Albania, found that gender has no influence on career choices. Similarly, studies carried out in Nigeria (Ottu & Nkenchor, 2010:3008) and in Kenya (Migunde et al., 2012:235) showed that there was no significant difference in the choices of boys and girls in professions such as teaching, trading

or business, law and judicial services as both sexes made virtually equal choices. These contradictions formed the basis of the need to carry out a study in Zimbabwe to establish whether gender has an influence in career choices among high school students or not.

The next section discusses the influence of peers on career choices.

2.5 PEER INFLUENCE AND CAREER CHOICE

Peer influence cannot be underestimated as it was found to be influential in career choices. Faiter and Faiter (2013:113) and Alika (2010b:180) in America, Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:181), Edwards and Quinter (2011:225) in Nigeria, Shumba and Naong (2012:171) in South Africa and Kimiti and Mwova (2012:364) in Kenya found that students were influenced by their peers in a variety of ways such as peer counselling, peer interaction, peer advice and peer relationships. Peer counselling is a way of relating, responding and helping aimed at exploring feelings, thoughts and concerns with the hope of reaching a clear understanding (Odirile, 2012:2). In schools, peer counselling is a phenomenon that was established to help students in schools solve problems (Bett, 2013:479). The main goal of peer counselling is to enable students to appreciate each other as well as to understand the importance of education (Odirile, 2012:3). Studies in Kenya (Kaaria, Nyaga, Oundo & Mureithi, 2014:215; Marangu, Bururia & Njonge, 2012:84) revealed that peer counsellors are important in mentoring students, sharing information and supporting each other.

Bett (2013:482) purported that the rationale of peer counselling is based on the assumption that people who share similar characteristics and ages tend to influence one another. Similarly, Chireshe (2013:353) in Zimbabwe reiterated the importance of peer counselling in schools when he argued that information was easily disseminated through peer counselling. Peer counselling is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory which informs this study which purports that social variables, such as peers, may influence earners' career choices.

Peers influence career choice through peer interactions. It was revealed in Uganda (Okiror & Otabong, 2015:18) and in Kenya (Walaba & Kiboss, 2013:12) that peer interactions influence students in choosing careers. As the students interact, they share information about careers. This is in line with Krumboltz' Social Learning Theory which emphasises the importance of learners interacting with one another in their environment.

Students' interactions with peers play a central role in how students think about themselves (Yi-Hui, 2006). In his study in China, Yi-Hui (2006) revealed that students' interactions with peers of diversified interests, races and backgrounds have the potential to stimulate reflection, knowledge and beliefs which may lead to new ways of thinking about the world, other peers and eventually themselves. For peers to understand the world of work, their interaction makes it possible for them to venture into careers they were unaware of. Kiuru (2008:36) also revealed the importance of peer interaction in Finland when he stated that the academic orientation typical of the peer group to which they belong may potentially have a long term impact on individual adolescents' vocational careers.

Faiter and Faiter (2013:113) and Roy (2016:4) in America, Goethner, Obschonka, Silbereisen and Canter (2009:25) in Germany, Njeri (2013:45) in Pakistan, Kimiti and Mwova (2012:364) in Kenya, Shumba and Naong (2012:364) in South Africa, and Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) in Nigeria reiterated the influence of peer advice on career choices. According to Migunde et al. (2012:235), when Kenyan students interact with their friends, they may take into consideration the career advice they receive. The current study intended to establish whether peer advice had an influence on high school students in Zimbabwe in their endeavours to choose careers.

In the absence of proper career guidance and teacher mentorship, students resort to peer mentorship. According to Njeri (2013:45) and Okiror and Otabong (2015:180) in Kenya, students turn to peers who have similar experiences for mentorship, information and guidance

on career issues especially when other proper avenues like school career guidance are not properly functioning. In Kenya, Koech et al. (2016:61) emphasise the influence of peer mentorship in students' choices of careers. However, in United Arab Emirates (Ausman, Javed, Ahmed, Samad, Pour, Mathew, Shaikh, Sharbatti & Screedharan, 2013:20), peer mentorship was found to have little influence on medical students' choices of careers. Ausman et al.'s study (2013) concentrated on a certain group of people who were already training for a particular career while the current study looked at students who are yet to engage in a career.

Peer relationships were also found to be influential in students' choices of careers. Kiuru (2008:35) purports that, in Finland, peer group members who are closely related are likely to end up in similar educational trajectories as they are likely to accept opinions from members who are similar to themselves. Kiuru (2008:34) further states that peer group members resembled each other, not only in their educational expectations, but also their subsequent educational trajectories. In a Nigerian study by Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015:330), peer relationships were revealed as a significant factor in helping students choose careers. Pakistani students who were close to each other in terms of friendship were likely to influence each other to take certain careers (Naz et al., 2014:1196). The current study sought to establish the influence of peer relationship on Zimbabwean students' choices of careers.

Alika (2010b:180), Ho (2006:85) and Obwoge and Kibor (2016:478) espouse that peer encouragement was found to be a critical factor in influencing American students' choice of careers. This is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which states that realistic encouragement leads to greater effort and eventually to greater success. Since high school students are adolescents, they may rely on people of their own age.

Peers also encourage students to choose entrepreneurship. Malaysian students were influenced by their peers to choose entrepreneurship as their careers (Mustapha & Selvaraju, 2015:167)

Similarly, in America, Kacperczky (2012:16) purports that entrepreneurial actions hinge on having access to information about entrepreneurial opportunities and influential peers enhance entrepreneurial rates by providing information to identify such opportunities. Although Kacperczky's (2012:4) study was carried out at a university, it established that university peers may facilitate the transfer of entrepreneurial initiatives and attitudes by alleviating the uncertainty associated with these careers. The current study was carried in Zimbabwean high schools with the intention to find out whether students in high schools were influenced by peers to choose entrepreneurship as career.

Hashim and Embong (2015:81) agree that the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence with regard to career choices. Adolescents are easily influenced by their peers because they rely on their friends to provide validation of the choices that they make, including career decisions. The current study sought to find out whether validation of students' choices of careers comes from fellow students.

A number of challenges were raised about the effectiveness of peer counselling in schools. Chireshe (2013:353), for example, cited lack of training among peer counsellors and Kamore and Tiego (2015:257) enumerated that failure by Kenyan peer counsellors to resolve their own problems impacted negatively on their duties as peer counsellors.

Contrary to earlier findings, it has been observed in America that there was no significant relationship between peer group influence and career choices in humanities among secondary school adolescents (Alika, 2010b:183). Peers were found to be less likely to influence high school students in choosing careers. The American study only concentrated on students who were in humanities. The current study did not look only at students specialising in a certain category but all students in Zimbabwean high schools.

2.6 SUMMARY

Literature has highlighted factors that influence career pathways. The role of school on career guidance and the influence of the family were cited as factors influencing career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. Gender issues and peer influences were also discussed with regards to their influence on students' career choices. The following chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to explore factors influencing the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. The research methodology issues in this chapter includes research paradigm, research design, sampling, instrumentation, procedure, ethical issues and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is a framework that guides research and practice in a field, includes a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality (Willis, 2007:8). It includes knowledge, a methodology and an epistemology that the researcher used to view the factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students (Tien, 2009:244). The ontological position of positivism is one of realism which has an existence independent of the knower (Scotland, 2012:9). Ontology is the assumption that we make about the nature of reality and epistemology is a general set of assumptions about the best ways of enquiring into the nature of the world (Esterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002:33).

A paradigm is used to represent people's values, judgements, norms, standards, frames of reference, perspectives, ideologies, myths, theories and the approved procedures that govern their thinking and actions (Gummesson, 2008:18 cited by Tien, 2009:243). Thus, philosophical assumptions or a theoretical paradigm about the nature of reality are crucial to understanding the overall perspective from which the study is designed and carried out (Krauss, 2005:759). Hence, considering the research philosophy in the present study could answer the question "what is the truth?" about factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students.

The subject of paradigm is often discussed in terms of the opposition between two schools of philosophy, positivism and interpretivism (Tien, 2009:243). The current study used positivism. Positivism provides a framework to explain reality as a criteria-given entity which can be understood objectively (Kroeze, 2012:1; Scotland, 2012:9; Mack, 2010:6; Tien, 2009:244). Positivists believe in the possibility to observe and describe reality from an objective viewpoint. According to Mack (2010:6), the characteristics of a positivist paradigm includes an emphasis on the scientific methods, statistical analysis and generalisability of findings.

According to a positivist epistemology, science is seen as a way to get at the truth, to understand the world well enough so that it might be predicted and controlled (Krauss, 2005:760). The truth is determined through verification of predictions (Tien, 2009:245). The present study sought to establish factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students. This included a literature review regarding career factors.

The only way to verify that knowledge is true is if it was created using a scientific method (McGregor & Murnane, 2010:423). The positivists believe in empiricism, the idea that observation and measurement are at the core of a scientific endeavour (Krauss, 2005:760). The purpose of using science to prove facts is to observe and measure (Krauss, 2005:760). The present study was scientific in nature as it was objective, used statistics in the analysis of data and emphasised the generalisation of results. Hence, the appropriateness of a positivist paradigm.

Positivists researchers are independent, detached and maintain a distance from the object of the research (Tien, 2009:245). In the current study, the researcher maintained minimal interaction with participants when collecting data. Participants completed the questionnaire in their own time. Positivists go forth into the world impartially separating themselves from the world they study (Krauss, 2005:760) and discovering knowledge which is directed at explaining

relationships (Creswell, 2009:7). The use of questionnaires in the current study allowed the researcher to deal with facts provided by the participants rather than feelings and emotions as used in other research paradigms. The researcher remained detached from the participants as they completed the questionnaires and sought to uncover the truth about factors that influence career choices among high school students objectively and impartially.

Positivism is a research strategy that argues that truth and reality are free and independent of the viewer and observer (Crossan, 2016:50; Aliyu, Bello, Kasim & Martin, 2014:81; MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006:194). As such, it was appropriate for the current study that sought to establish the factors that influence career choices among high school students without any interference from the researcher.

Research design will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be viewed as a plan, structure and strategy of a research to find the tools to solve the problem and to minimise the variance (Kothari and Crag, 2014:29; Creswell, 2013:23). Its function therefore is to ensure that the evidence obtained ensures that the initial question is answered as unambiguously as possible.

According to Kothari and Crag (2014:30), research design facilitates the attainment of the various research operations thereby making research as efficient as possible and yielding maximum information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. For the above to be achieved, a suitable paradigm should embrace a scientific approach which is always advocated by the quantitative approach. A quantitative approach which was informed by the positivist paradigm was used in the current study to assess factors that influence high school students to choose careers. The next section discusses the quantitative approach.

3.3.1 The Quantitative Approach

Quantitative researchers operate under the assumption of objectivity (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:36) and that there is reality to be observed and that rational observers who look at the same phenomenon will basically agree on its existence (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:36). In the present study, objective findings validated the results of the study because they were based on the actual findings from the field as the researcher remained distanced from the participants.

A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses positivist claims for developing knowledge (Creswell, 2003:19). The positivist paradigm leads to a scientific and systematic approach to research. A quantitative approach was used in this study as it allowed the researcher to carry out an objective analysis and generate factual knowledge through measurement. Researchers who use quantitative tools and techniques that emphasise measuring and counting are positivists in nature (Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012:133, Mack, 2010:6; Krauss, 2005:760).The positivist approach depends on quantifiable observations that lead to statistical analysis of data.

Quantitative data is analysed using statistics (Punch, 2005:108). It is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena (Tewksbury, 2009:38). Explaining phenomena using measurements and statistics (Hoy, 2010:1) was the key to the current study since it allowed the researcher to investigate and explain factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students. Quantitative research methods are characterised by the collection of information which can be analysed numerically and presented in tables for easier analysis and interpretation. The present study used tables and percentages to analyse factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students. Rasinger (2008:10) agrees that the main characteristic of quantitative data

is that it consists of information that is quantifiable. This allowed the researcher to quantify the magnitude and scope of the factors that influence career choices among high school students.

Borrego, Douglas and Amelink (2009:54) stated that quantitative research is useful to quantify opinions, attitudes and behaviours and find out how the whole population feels about a certain issue. Since the current study sought to investigate the influence of families, schools, gender and peers on students' choices of careers, a quantitative approach was best suited as it allowed the researcher to compare the results between students at different types of schools in different locations.

In a quantitative approach, a researcher will set aside his or her experiences, perceptions, and biases to ensure reliability in the conducting of the study and the conclusions that are drawn (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006:433). The use of questionnaires in the current study upheld the principle of objectivity and removed bias. The strengths of a quantitative approach in this study was that data was presented numerically thereby allowing easier analysis of factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students. According to Muijs (2011:7), quantitative research provides information from a large number of units thereby allowing generalisability of results. It was therefore prudent to use a quantitative approach in the current study since the sample used was large. However, its main drawback is that gaps in information are difficult to recognise. This means that issues which are not included in the questionnaire are not included in the analysis.

Various topics in Social Sciences and Education have been examined through the quantitative approach, for instance, Gray (2014), Kothari and Carg (2014), Creswell (2007, 2009, 2013), Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013), Somekh and Lewin (2012), Clark (2011) and Tewksbury (2009). The current study used the quantitative approach in similar environments to investigate the factors that influence the choices of careers amongst high school students.

The next subsection of the quantitative approach discusses the survey design which was adopted in this study.

3.3.1.1 The survey design

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:377) explained that surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determining the relationships that exist between specific events. The current study used survey design to assess factors that influence the choices of career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe.

Several studies in educational psychology have successfully used surveys, for example, in America (Cheema, 2014:68; Magee, Rickards, Byres & Artino, 2013:5; Locklear, 2012:23; Glasow, 2005:10), in the United Kingdom (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2007:6), in Australia (Nutty, 2008:312; Murphy & Schulz, 2006:14), in Asia (Darbyshire & Haarms, 2015:20; Lu, Chin, Yao, Hu & Xiao, 2010:118; Kim & Terada-Hagiwara, 2010:22; Kuroda, Yuki & Kang, 2010:14) and in Southern and Eastern Africa, (Bayaga & Lekena, 2010:140; Ross, 2005:2). Backed by the successes of surveys across the world, the current study used a survey to collect data since it is impartial and reduces bias (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:331). Because a survey does not expose individuals to invasive techniques or withhold treatment, it is considered more ethical (Mathers et al, 2007:6). It was the aim of the present study to uphold ethics in order to protect participants from forms of unethical data collection.

The representativeness of a survey is entirely dependent upon the accuracy of the sampling frame used (Mathers et al., 2007:6, Glasow, 2005:1). The current study's sample was representative of the population under study since the probability sampling technique was used. All schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe were represented in the study.

Survey research involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. It is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals and educational settings (Glasow, 2005:1). Schools in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe comprising boarding schools, mission schools, day schools, urban and rural secondary schools participated in the present study. Many variables such as the influence of schools, families, gender and peers on students' choices of careers were measured without substantially increasing the time and the costs. As noted by Mathers et al. (2007:6-7), the strengths of using the survey outweigh the weaknesses. Survey research produces data based on real world observations. Kelley, Clark, Brown and Sitzia (2003:261) also reiterated that surveys can produce a large amount of data in a short time for a fairly low cost. The study took advantage of the above strengths to carry the present study to save both time and money.

Mathers et al. (2007:6) stated that a survey which is based on a random sampling technique produces a sample which is representative of the particular population under study and produces findings which may be generalised to the wider population thus enhancing external and internal validity which were essential in this study. External validity allows generalisability of results to a wider population and internal validity is the priority for research (Steckler & McLeroy, 2008:9). A survey can also cover geographically spread samples which made it suitable for the current study as schools in the Midlands province are spread far apart.

Scheuren (2004:9) stated that, in a bona fide survey, the sample is not selected haphazardly or only from persons who volunteer to participate, it is scientifically chosen so that each person in the population has a measurable chance of being selected. The current study subscribed to the above assertion as a stratified random sampling was used to select both the schools and the students who participated.

The following section discusses the population.

3.4 POPULATION

For the current study, the population included all high school students and career guidance teachers in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. These included students in day schools, boarding schools, government schools and mission schools, including both boys and girls in Forms 4 to 6. The total population is approximately 12 000 students and 200 career guidance teachers.

The following section discusses the sample.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Ten percent of the population in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe for both students and career guidance teachers were selected. A total of 1200 students and 20 school career guidance teachers participated in the study. These were selected through a stratified random sampling technique. This is a sampling frame that is divided into subsections comprising groups that are relatively homogeneous with respect to one or more characteristics and a random sample from each stratum is selected (Colins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2007:272). Breakwell, Hammond, Fife-Schaw and Smith (2006:115) stated that stratified random sampling divides the sample up into separate subgroups and then selects random samples from within each group. Bhattacherjee (2012:67) stated that the sampling frame is divided into homogeneous and non-overlapping subgroups and a simple random sample is drawn within each subgroup. In other words, stratified random sampling is a method in which individuals are taken to represent each major stratum or layer within the population.

Twenty students per form (i.e. Forms 4, 5 and 6) were given questionnaires. Schools were put in different categories which were day schools, boarding schools, government schools, mission schools, rural and urban schools. All the names of the schools in the province from each category were put in a hat for random selection. A large sample of this magnitude was

appropriate for this study since the study had participants from diverse backgrounds which would reduce sample errors and provide greater statistical power. Most of the career studies reviewed had restricted their samples to only one career and, at most, two schools thereby having a limited number of participants. This caused problems with the generalisation of results to a wider population. In selecting the schools, the same method (stratified random sampling) was used. Schools were categorised into groups, namely, boarding and day schools, and urban and rural schools. Table 3.1 below shows the participants in the present study.

Table 3.1: Day schools that participated in the study

School	District	Participants
A	Gweru	60
B	Gweru	60
C	Kwekwe	60
D	Kwekwe	60
E	Shurugwi	60
F	Shurugwi	60
G	Mberengwa	60
H	Chirumanzu	60
I	Gokwe	60
J	Zvishavane	60

Table 3.1 reflects the participating districts and number of participants per district in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Every district was represented in the sample although Gweru, Kwekwe and Shurugwi had more participants compared to the other four districts.

Table 3.2 shows the boarding schools that participated in the study.

Table 3.2: Boarding Schools which participated in the study

School	District	Participants
A	Gweru	60
B	Gweru	60
C	Kwekwe	60
D	Shurugwi	60
E	Shurugwi	60
F	Gweru	60
G	Gweru	60
H	Chirumanzu	60
I	Zvishavane	60
J	Mberengwa	60

Table 3.2 shows the participants from boarding schools. Every district was represented in the study.

The table below shows the urban schools that took part in the study.

Table 3.3: Distribution of urban school participants

Schools	Form 4	Form 5	Form 6	Total	Counsellors
A	20	20	20	60	1
B	20	20	20	60	1
C	20	20	20	60	1
D	20	20	20	60	1
E	20	20	20	60	1
F	20	20	20	60	1
G	20	20	20	60	1
H	20	20	20	60	1
I	20	20	20	60	1
J	20	20	20	60	1
Total	**200**	**200**	**200**	**600**	**10**

A total of 1200 students participated in the study of which 600 students were from urban schools. Forms 4, 5 and 6 were equally represented in the study. Each school was also represented by a career guidance counsellor.

The table below indicates the distribution of rural schools that participated in the study.

Table 3.4: Distribution of rural school participants

School	Form 4	Form 5	Form 6	Total	Counsellors
A	20	20	20	60	1
B	20	20	20	60	1
C	20	20	20	60	1
D	20	20	20	60	1
E	20	20	20	60	1
F	20	20	20	60	1
G	20	20	20	60	1
H	20	20	20	60	1
I	20	20	20	60	1
J	20	20	20	60	1
Total	**200**	**200**	**200**	**600**	**10**

A total of 1200 students took part in the study of which 600 student participants came from the rural areas. All the rural schools were represented in the study with equal participants from each form. Every participating school was represented by a school guidance teacher.

The table below shows the distribution of participants of the sample by district.

Table 3.5: Distribution of participants of the sample by district

District	Students	Counsellors
Gweru	360	6
Gokwe	60	1
Kwekwe	180	3
Chirumanzu	180	3
Mberengwa	120	2
Shurugwi	240	4
Zvishavane	60	1

Table 3.5 indicates that Gweru district had the most number of participants in the study followed by Shurugwi. Gokwe and Zvishavane districts had the least number of participants in the study.

3.5.1 Sampling school counsellors

School counsellors of the selected schools were automatically part of the sample.

3.5.2 Sampling students

Of all the 10 schools selected, 20 students (10 boys and 10 girls) from Forms 4 to 6 were randomly selected. Pieces of paper with numbers 1-10 were put in a hat with the rest of papers being blank. Boys picked papers in their own hat while girls picked from their own to avoid selecting students of the same sex. Those who picked the ones with numbers participated in the study.

3.5.3 Biographical data of participants

Table 3.6 Biographical variables of participants (n=1030)

Participants	Biographical Variable	Variable Description	Frequency
		15-16	194 (19.2%)
		17-18	641 (63.5%)
		19+	175 (17.3%)
		Male	451 (44.7%)
		Female	559 (55.3%)
		4	400 (39.6%)
		5	368 (36.4%)
		6	242 (24%)
		Town	525 (52%)
		Rural	409 (40.5%)
		Farm	76 (7.5%)
		Boarding	521 (51.6%)
		Day	489 (48.4%)
		Boarder	384 (38%)
		Day	626 (62%)
		Primary school	48 (4.3%)
		Secondary School	296 (29.3%)
		College	269 (26.6%)
		University	397 (39.3%)
		Primary	56 (5.5%)
		Secondary	396 (39.2%)
		College	309 (30.6%)
		University	249 (24.7%)
		Male	9 (45%)
		Female	11 (55%)
		25years and below	2 (10%)
		26-40 years	7 (35%)
		41-50years	10 (50%)
		51 and above	1 (5%)
		Teachers	18 (90%)
		Counsellors	2 (10%)
		1-5years	1 (5%)
		6-10years	4 (20%)
		11-20years	9 (45%)
		Above 20years	6 (30%)

Table 3.6 shows the biographical variables of all the participants in the study. Table 3.6 above reflects that the majority of the student participants were aged between 17 and 18 years. There were more female participants than males. The student participants were from Forms 4, 5 and 6, with Form 4 having the largest number of participants. Urban schools had more student

participants than rural schools with day scholars outnumbering the boarders. Government, church and private schools were all represented in the study although the majority were government schools followed by church schools. Table 3.6 also shows a variety of parents' educational qualifications. Most of the parents whose children participated in the study had at least secondary school qualifications to degree level. Table 3.6 also reflects that most of the school career guidance teachers had a teaching qualification and only 10% were trained school career guidance counsellors. There were more female career teachers than male participants. Most of the career guidance participants were between 41 and 50 years old. The majority of the career guidance participants had between 11 and 20 years' teaching experience.

The following section examines instrumentation.

3.6 INSTRUMENTATION

This section basically looks at the instruments used in this study. The study used questionnaires to collect the data. The reasons why the researcher preferred questionnaires over other instruments are highlighted below.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Cohen et al. (2011:377) purport that a questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data that is administered without the presence of the researcher and often comparatively straight forward to analyse. Since the researcher did not intent to engage research assistants, questionnaires were the best instruments since they could be administered without the presence of the researcher and were clear and precise. Siniscalco and Ariat (2005:3) stated that a questionnaire is a survey instrument used to collect data from individuals about themselves or about a social unit such as household or a school. It is regarded as a valid and reliable way of collecting correct information from the participants.

The questionnaire was used in this study to collect data from high school students and counsellors regarding factors that influence the choice of careers. This is in line with Acharya (2010:3) who argues that questionnaires intend to obtain answers either on the facts related to the respondents or the opinions of the respondents regarding the subjective or even the objective matters. Ross (2005:4) concurs with the above when he states that among the type of information that can be collected by means of a questionnaire are facts, opinions, activities, level knowledge, expectations, attitudes and perceptions. The current study sought to collect objective data and also facts, opinions, expectations and level of knowledge with regard to factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. However, as pointed by Bird (2009:1131), to produce a valid and reliable questionnaire, the wording of the items should be precise and unambiguous. The wording of the questionnaire in the current study went through a rigorous test exercise through the use of senior academics and other researchers who verified their validity.

The current study chose the questionnaire since it was easy to analyse because every respondent was asked the same question in the same way. The researcher therefore was sure that everyone in the sample answered exactly the same questions which made it a reliable method. The researcher also chose a questionnaire over other instruments to enable collection of information in a standardised manner which, when gathered from a representative sample of a defined population, allows the inference of results to the wider population (Rottrary & Jones, 2007:239).

The main advantage of using a questionnaire is its effectiveness in collecting quality data that is easy to interpret (Cohen et al., 2011:377) so that quality findings will be achieved. It was imperative in the present study that participants provided quality data to enhance reliability. According to Mathers et al. (2007:19), all questionnaires should take into account whether the

questionnaire will be self-completed. Questionnaires can be administered personally, by post or through email (Edwards, 2010:3; Graham, Papandonatos, Bock, Cobb, Baskin-Sommers, Niaura & Abrams, 2006:1; Jenkins & Dillman, 1995:3; Dillman, 1991:226). The current study used self-administered questionnaires which were personally delivered.

A questionnaire which is to be completed by the respondent needs to be very clearly laid out with no complex filtering and simple instructions (Fanning, 2005:2). In the current study, the researcher gave clear instructions to the respondents on how to complete the questionnaire as it was self-completed. The literacy level of the respondents should also be considered. Respondents with low literacy levels may have greater difficulty completing a self-completed questionnaire (Mathers et al., 2007:19; Bird, 2009:1311). The literacy level was considered in the current study as the participants were high school students and career guidance teachers who, it was assumed, would understand the questions. The questions were written in simple language and were brief. It has been established that the more motivated the respondent, the more likely the researcher is to get a questionnaire in a survey returned. If a high response rate is anticipated, then a self-completion survey is sufficient but, on the other hand, if a low response rate is expected, then a personal interview survey is likely to achieve higher acquiescence (Mathers, 2007:19; Bradbury, Sunman, & Wansink, 2004:283). The main motivating factors in this study were the way the questions were structured. Most of the questions required that the participants ticked the appropriate answer to the question. The questions were relevant to the participants as they were in the process of choosing careers.

The questionnaire consisted of items that sought to, firstly, assess the influence of family on their children's career pathways. Secondly, the questionnaire included items that assessed the impact of schools on students' career choices and, thirdly, the items in the questionnaire assessed the impact of gender on high school students' career choices. Lastly, there were items

on the influence of peers on career choices. A Likert scale was used in most of the closed questions. A five point Likert scale was used in this study to rate each item on a response scale. The primary reason for using a Likert scale is that the data is easy to code (Colosi, 2006:3). To ensure that questions were not ambiguous, a pilot study was carried out in an environment with similar characteristics as the one under study.

The use of questionnaires as a method of data collection in educational research globally has increased recently with competitive results as evidenced by the studies that used questionnaires successfully (Rottrary & Jones, 2007; Chireshe, 2012b; Edwards & Quinter, 2011; Mapfumo et al., 2002). The current study sought to take advantage of this proven and tested instrument to obtain valid and reliable data.

3.6.1.1 Closed-ended questions

A closed ended question is one where the possible answers are defined in advance and so the respondent is limited to one of the pre-coded responses given (Mathers et al., 2007:20). Highly structured closed ended questions are useful because they can generate frequencies of responses amenable to statistical treatment and analysis and are quicker to code and analyse than word based data (Cohen, et al., 2011:282). They also enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample (Cohen et al., 2011:382). The advantages of using closed ended questions in the current study were that carefully chosen response options allowed for the same frame of reference for all participants when choosing an answer. The answers to closed ended questions are pre-determined and, as a result, they are both more specific than open ended questions and more likely to promote consistency among respondents in terms of understanding both the question and the response required (Colosi, 2006:2). Hence closed ended questions were preferred in the current study as they allowed the researcher to generate frequencies on factors that influence the choice of careers that were easy to analyse.

3.6.1.2 Open ended questions

Colosi (2006:1) stated that open ended questions do not place restrictions on the answers respondents can provide. In other words, open ended questions allow the respondents to express themselves without limitations as compared to closed questions which prescribe a range of responses from which the respondent may choose. The answers provided may be rich in detail but it may be difficult to compare the responses over a large number of participants because the question is not direct (Leiva, Rios & Martinez, 2006:520; Mathers et al., 2007:20). Open ended questions yield more varied responses than closed ended questions and may highlight responses that evaluators could not have anticipated. However, the problem with open ended questions is that if there are many respondents, many different answers may be received which can be time consuming to code (Mathers et al., 2007:20) therefore the researcher of this study reduced the number of open ended questions to a minimum. They were included to take advantage of the above noted advantages of which one of them is the richness of the data. In the open ended questions, the respondent will interpret the question in his/her own way (Mathers et al., 2007:20; Meadows, 2003:265) which elicits unique information. This is in line with Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert (2007:24) who argue that open ended questions can augment and explain complex or contradictory survey questions.

The review of related literature in Chapter 2 helped in the provision of questionnaire items as indicated in Table 3.6 on the next page.

Table 3.7: Examples of questionnaire items obtained from the review of related literature by authors

Author(s)	Items
Slovacek, Jacob and Flenoury (2015:73); Petters, Asuquo and Eyo (2015:92); Obiyo and Eze (2015) Abiola (2014:231); Dodge and Welderndael (2014:46); Ogunyewo et al. (2015:28); Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:811); Clutter (2010:12); Edwards and Quinter (2011:82); Qin (2010:81); Zayas and McGuigan (2006:529); Adya and Keiser (2005:247); Korrir and Wafula (2012:87); Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013:92); Barker (2010:6); Dustman (2004:227); O'Shea and Kirrane (2008:245); Duffy and Dik (2009:33); Aslam et al. (2012:122); Law Ching and Keith (2011:6) Law and Yeun (2011:61); Bardick et al. (2004:106)	Level of family influence on career pathways
Mishkin, Wandrowics, Dori & Dori (2016:227); Uka (2015:212); Morales et al. (2016), Aguado et al. (2015:273), Simiyu (2015:88) Ferreira and Lima (2010:298); Watts and Sultana (2004:111); Kimiti and Mwova (2012:366); Shumba and Naong (2012:171); Jackson and Nutini (2002:58); Lazarus and Chinwe (2011:58); Flores and Obasi (2005:147); Mghweno et al. (2014:13); Chireshe (2012a:306); Eyo (2011:338); Kelechi et al. (2013:166); Rowland (2004:9); Chemeli (2013:56)	Impact of gender on career choices
Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:811); Ogunyewo et al., (2015:28) Jamabo et al. (2012:91); Corrigall and Konrad (2007: 847); Behrend et al. (2007:5); Igbinedion (2011:332); Agarwala (2008:362); Klapwijk and Rommes (2009:404); Griffin et al. (2011:177); Tang et al. (2008:285-295); Favara (2012:30); Mapfumo et al. (2002:161); Obura and Ajowi (2012:45); Migunde et al. (2012:235)	School influence on career choices
Kaaria et al. (2014:215); Okiror and Otabong, (2015:18); Kamore and Tiego (2015:257) Alika (2010b:179); Migunde et al. (2012:235); Alika (2010b:180); Kacperczky (2012:16); Shumba and Naong (2012:171); Edwards and Quinter (2011:255); Kimiti and Mwova (2012:364)	Peer influence on students' career choices

Table 3.6 shows categories of questionnaire items that were formulated to collect data on the factors that influence the choices of career pathways among high school students. The following were the broad categories in the questionnaire:

Section A: Covered biographical data of participants;

Section B: Level of family influence on career pathways;

Section C: Items focusing on school influence on career pathways;

Section D: Items on the influence of gender on career choices;

Section E: Focuses on items that relate to peer influence on career choices.

The following section discusses reliability and validity.

3.6.2 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are critical elements in research. These two elements were observed in this study.

3.6.2.1 Reliability

Reliability is generally defined as the degree to which a measure of a construct is consistent and dependable. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:31) further define reliability as the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields certain results when the entity being measured has not changed. Consistency of the instrument was achieved through a number of initiatives. The researcher initially used peers to check for consistence of results. The researcher also approached senior researchers in the field. The supervisor played a pivotal role in ensuring that consistency of the results were enhanced. The instrument was also pilot tested.

3.6.2.2 Validity

Validity is a researcher's ability to draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population (Creswell, 2005:600). This is in line with Joppe (2000:1) who purported that validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure and the truthfulness of the research results. Questionnaire items were

developed from the reviewed literature. A large sample which was representative of the population was used in the current study. Objectives of the current study were clearly spelt out to enable credible results.

The researcher designed a questionnaire with items that were clear and used the language that was understood by all the participants. The questionnaires were given to the supervisor to check for errors and vagueness. Other professionals in the area, such as senior career guidance teachers, were consulted and made their comments regarding the ability of the questionnaire to measure what it was designed to measure which were factors that influence career choices among high school students. Only items that involved factors that influence the choice of careers (family, schools, gender, peers) were considered in the present study.

The following section documents the pilot study.

3.6.3 Pilot study

Before the study was carried out, the items on the questionnaire were tested to avoid ambiguity and to test for validity and reliability. This was done through a pilot study that was carried out prior to the actual collection of the data. A pilot study can be defined as a small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study (Polit & Beck, 2004:416). Such a trial run may have various purposes such as testing study procedures, validity of tools, estimation of the recruitment rate and an estimation of parameters such as the variance of the outcome variable to calculate sample size (Arain, Campbell, Cooper & Lancaster, 2010:1). The current study tested whether the items in the questionnaire were valid and reliable as recommended by Welman and Kruger (1999:146) who stated that a pilot study is needed to detect possible flaws in measurement procedures and is also valuable to identify unclear or ambiguous items in a questionnaire. Polit and Beck (2004:3) also argued that surveys are pilot tested to avoid

misleading, inappropriate or redundant questions. The aim of a pilot study therefore is to detect any flaws in the questioning and correct these prior to the main survey (Burgess, 2001:15).

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996:122) stated that the value of pilot research cannot be overestimated. They argued that things never work quite the way you envisage, even if you have done them many times before and they have a nasty habit of turning out very differently than you expected (Blaxter, et al., 1996:122). The pilot research of the current study led to a more refined instrument.

An advantage of conducting a pilot study is that it can give advance warning regarding weaknesses in a proposed study. Turner (2005:5) noted the learning opportunities the researcher can extract from assessing the feasibility of any study by testing the efficacy of a research instrument and presents them as risk mitigation strategies. The questionnaires were given to a smaller number of participants in Forms 4, 5 and 6 with characteristics similar to the sample to be used in the main study. The school that was selected for the pilot study was not used again in the main study. The same procedure used in the pilot study was used in the main study.

After the data in the pilot study was collected, the researcher went through the questions in order to identify those that needed to be amended so that the correct data would be collected for the study. This is in line with Polit and Beck (2004:3) who stated that pilot testing ensures that a research instrument can be used properly and that information obtained is consistent.

3.6.3.1 Sample of the pilot study

The sample for the pilot study was composed of five career guidance teachers and 20 students, ten girls and ten boys from the same school.

3.6.3.2 Sampling procedure of the pilot study

A simple random sampling technique was used to identify the pilot study participants. Students in all strata (Forms 4-6) were represented in the study. Only one school was selected for the pilot study for students and five schools for career guidance teachers.

Data collection procedure will be dealt with in the subsequent section.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission was sought from all relevant authorities including the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Head Office. The researcher also received written permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Midlands Provincial Offices. After sampling the schools, the researcher visited each school that was selected and sought permission from the school authorities to carry out the study. Dates to visit the schools for questionnaire distribution were put in place in advance. The researcher physically took the instruments to the respective schools. Collection dates of the instruments were set and communicated to both the school authorities and the students. The participants were told that responses and data collected will be stored in a safe place where the researcher alone could access them. To accomplish that, the questionnaire related the purpose of the study and the guidelines on how to complete the questionnaire as follows:

> *This questionnaire seeks to assess factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. The study is part of the researcher's Doctor of Education in Psychology Degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and should help career guidance and counselling services provision in schools. You do not need to write your name as no respondent will be traced or identified from this study whatsoever as confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is only interested in your own opinion. All data and information generated from*

this study will be treated as strictly private and confidential. You are therefore kindly requested to complete the questionnaire as honest as possible. Thank you for participating in this study.

The following section reflects on data analysis.

3.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.8.1 Coding

Coding is the process of applying the thematic framework to the data, using numerical or textual codes to identify specific pieces of data which respond to different themes (Lacey & Luff, 2001:10). The purpose of coding is to assign codes (numbers) for each category of answers. According to Mathers et al. (2007:42), coding is the process by which responses to questionnaires or other data is assigned a numerical value or code in order that the data can be transferred to a computer for data analysis. In the current study, closed ended questions were coded for computer software analysis.

3.8.2 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics in the form of percentages were used in this study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 19 was used to analyse the data. Data was converted into percentages and ratios for easier interpretation. Calculation of ratios for each questionnaire item was done to identify items that were positively or negatively rated in terms of their influence to career choices. Ratios were calculated by adding the positive responses (Strongly agreed and Agreed) and divide them by the sum of negative responses (Strongly disagreed and Disagreed).

3.8.3 Content Analysis

The few open ended questions were analysed through content analysis. Content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyse text data. The goal of content analysis is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. It was appropriate to use content analysis in the present study to analyse the open ended questions in the questionnaire.

The following section covers ethical considerations.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics are about identifying certain norms and standards of behaviour that researchers are expected to follow (Connolly, 2003:4). In carrying out this research, the researcher took cognisance of the ethical guidelines in order to protect the participants and the researcher himself. The following ethical issues were addressed:

3.9.1 Informed consent

According to Taylor, Peplau and Sears (2012:28), informed consent implies the agreement to participate in research after learning about the study, including possible risks and benefits. This implies that the participants must be aware of what the research entails and how they are going to benefit from the research. The students and school counsellors were given time to consider the risks and benefits of being involved in this research and decide whether to take part without being coerced. Participants were also informed of all the benefits and risks of the study. The schools signed the consent forms on behalf of the students. Since the research participants are mostly students, the researcher sought authority from the school management. The participants were told about the general nature of the study as well as about any potential harm or risk that the study may cause.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

Cohen et al. (2011:92) defined confidentiality as not disclosing information from the participant in any way that might identify that individual or that might enable the individual to be traced. The researcher used coding abstracted data with unique identifiers rather than names and masking features of specific cases, institutions or settings that may make them recognisable even without names (WHO, 2013:25). The researcher considered the way the data was to be protected from unauthorised persons. Passwords were also used to protect the data on soft copies.

3.9.3 Anonymity

Anonymity means that we do not name the person or research site involved but in research it is usually extended to mean that we do not include information about any individual or research site that will enable that individual or research site to be identified by others (Walford, 2005:84). In the current study, numbers were used on questionnaires in place of participants and schools' names. The researcher agreed with school authorities to make information public if the participants wished so.

3.9.4 Permission

An ethical clearance certificate was obtained from UNISA. Permission to carry out the study was sought from The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education Head Office, The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Midlands Province and also from schools that participated in the study.

3.9.5 Harm to participants

The balance of protecting respondents from harm by hiding their identity while, at the same time, preventing "loss of ownership" are issues that need to be addressed by each researcher on an individual basis with each respondent (Grinyer, 2002:7). The researcher in this study

made sure that participants were not exposed to physical, psychological and emotional harm. Sufficient information was provided to the participants so that they could make informed decisions. Data was not disclosed to any other person without the consent of the participants. The researcher carried out a thorough risk/benefit analysis.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, research design, sampling techniques and instrumentation. Also discussed in this chapter is the procedure in the collection of data, data analysis and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents data presentation, analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data collected from high school students and career guidance teachers in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe according to the objectives.

4.2 FAMILY INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICES

The following section presents the influence of the family on the children's career choices. The family aspects include both the nuclear family members which comprise the father, mother and other siblings. The extended family members were also considered. These include aunts, uncles, grandparents and other related family members. Table 4.2 on the next page shows how family members influence career choices of high school students.

Table 4.1 Students' response on family influence (n=1010)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1.My father influenced me into the career I want to pursue	232 (23%)	222 (22.0%)	190 (18.8%)	193 (19.1%)	173 (17.1%)	1010 (12.5%)	1.2
2.My mother influenced me into the career I want to pursue	230 (22.8%)	247 (24.5%)	202 (20%)	192 (19%)	139 (13.8%)	1010 (12.5%)	1.4
3.The family business is a factor in my choosing a career	108 (10.7%)	175 (17.3%)	164 (16.2%)	327 (32.4%)	236 (23.4%)	1010 (12.5%)	0.6
4.The dominant profession in my family is also my preferred career	119 (11.8%)	161 (15.9)	137 (13.6%)	321 (31.8%)	272 (26.9%)	1010 (12.5%)	0.5
5..My father's career had an impact on my career choice	327 (32.4%)	175 (17.3%)	140 (13.9%)	226 (22.4%)	142 (14.1%)	1010 (12.5%)	1.4
6.My mother's career had an impact on my career choice	361 (35.7%)	243 (24.1%)	147 (14.6%)	171 (16.9%)	88 (8.7%)	1010 (12.5%)	2.3
7.Older siblings had an influence on my career	226 (24.4%)	278 (27.5%)	141 (14%)	211 (20.9%)	154 (15.2%)	1010 (12.5%)	1.4
8.An extended family member was influential in the career that I chose	249 (24.7%)	232 (23%)	134 (13.3%)	225 (22.3%)	170 (16.8)	1010 (12.5%)	0.9
Total	1852 (22.9%)	1733 (21.4%)	1255 (15.3%)	1866 (23.1%)	1374 (16.6%)	8080	

Table 4.1 shows the ratios where parents were quite influential to their children's career choices. The ratios are on the high side where most of the items are above 1 and a few are below1which implies positive relationship. The mother (47.3%) and the siblings (51%) have a major influence on children's career choices when compared to the father (46%), the family business (28%), the dominant profession in the family (27.7%) and the extended family members which had varied influences although at lower levels. The mother's (59.8%) and father's (51.9%) career were also seen as having an impact on their children's choices of careers. Family business and dominant profession in the family had the least influence.

4.2.1 Students' responses on family influential members as reflected by open ended questions

Other influential members of the family, as shown by responses from an open ended question, were aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Extended family members who are employed were identified as quite influential by most of the student participants. Relatives who run businesses were also cited as influential especially by students from the rural areas and farms.

Table 4.1 on the next page presents career guidance teachers' responses on family influence.

Table 4.1 Career Teacher's responses on family influence (N20)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1 Parents' influence on children affect career guidance at school	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	1 (5%)	3 (25%)	0	20(9.09%)	5.3
2 Students come to school with predetermined careers	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	0	20(9.09%)	2.0
3 Parental education has an impact on children's career choice	7 (35%)	9 (45%0	0	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	20(9.09%)	4.0
4 Parental actions have an impact on their children's careers	4 (20%)	10 (50%)	3 (15)	3 (15%)	0	20(9.09%)	4.7
5 The bond between children and parents is influential to children's choice of careers	2 (10%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	0	20(9.09%)	3.0
6 Adolescents who cannot separate effectively from their parents are not free to make independent career choices	6 (30%)	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	0	20(9.09%)	5.3
7 Children choose certain careers to please their parents	6 (30%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	0	20(9.09%)	7.0
8 Parental values and beliefs influence children on career choices	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	0	20(9.09%)	4.3
9 Parents can create interest of certain careers in their children	7 (35%)	12 (60%)	0	1 (5%)	0	20(9.09%)	19.0
10 Family members can be identified as models by children	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	20(9.09%)	18.0
11 Parental connectedness and expectations are influential in children's choice of careers	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	20(9.09%)	9.0
Total	57 (25.91%)	107 (48.64%)	26 (11.82%)	28 (12.73%)	2(0.9%)	220(100%)	

According to the ratios in Table 4.1, family members who are considered to be models have an impact on children's choice of careers. Career guidance teachers positively rated the influence of family on students' career choices as reflected by the ratios in Table 4.1 above which are very high. Generally career guidance teachers were in agreement that parental

influence (80%) has an impact on children's career choices. As reflected in Table 4.1, teachers see parental influence as quite influential to children's choice of careers. Table 4.1 also shows that family members who are considered to be role models (90%) have an impact on children's choices of careers. Career guidance teachers are in agreement that students may have predetermined careers and that parental education has an impact on their children's choices of careers. Parental actions, values and beliefs were influential to their children's choice of career. Career guidance teachers agreed that adolescents who cannot separate effectively from their parents are not free to make independent career decisions. Parental education is said to be influential to children's choice of careers as shown in Table 4.1. Table 4.1 also shows that high school students can be influenced to take certain careers through parental connectedness and expectations, the bond between children and their parents, creation of interest by parents to their children and that children choose certain careers to please their parents.

The next section looks at the influence of schools on high school students' career choices.

4.3 SCHOOL INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE

In investigating how the school influences high school students' choices of careers, issues such as career guidance in schools, school career days and trips, teachers, school heads and career guidance teachers were explored. Screening of students, subjects done at schools and the curriculum, among others, were also assessed to find out whether they influence students' career choices. Table 4.2 on the next page presents students' responses on school influence on career choices.

Table 4.2 Students' response on school influence on career choice (n=1010)

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1.Career guidance is comprehensively offered at our school	187 (18.5%)	293 (29%)	151 (15%)	177 (17.5%)	201 (19.9%)	1010 (8.33%)	1.3
2.School career days influenced my career choice	149 (14.8%)	260 (25.7%)	177 (17.5%)	226 (22.4%)	198 (19.6%)	1010 (8.33%)	1.0
3.Career trips or field trips influenced my career choice	173 (17.1%)	191 (18.9%)	155 (15.3%)	224 (22.2%)	267 (26.4%)	1010 (8.33%)	0.7
4School career guidance cleared career confusion that I had	245 (24.3%)	222 (22%)	176 (17.4%)	154 (15.2%)	213 (21.1%)	1010 (8.33%)	1.3
5My class teacher was influential to the career I want to pursue	148 (14.7%)	239 (23.7%)	176 (17.4%)	236 (23.4%)	211 (20.9%)	1010 (8.33%)	0.9
6.The career guidance counsellor was influential to the career I want to do	122 (12.1%)	281 (27.8%)	160 (15.8%)	260 (25.7%)	187 (18.5%)	1010 (8.33%)	0.9
7.The school head was influential to the career I want to do	150 (14.9%)	178 (17.6%)	160 (15.8%)	250 (24.8%)	272 (26.9%)	1010 (8.33%)	0.6
8.The subjects I do influenced my career decision	459 (45.4%)	300 (29.7%)	92 (9.1%)	91 (9%)	67 (6.6%)	1010 (8.33%)	4.8
9.Former students' careers had a positive influence on my career choice	204 (20.2%)	276 (27.3%)	199 (19.7%)	184 (18.2%)	147 (14.6%)	1010 (8.33%)	1.4
10.School career exploration and career decision making activities broaden students' career horizons	208 (20.6%)	261 (25.8%)	254 (25.1%)	157 (15.5%)	130 (12.9%)	1010 (8.33%)	1.6
11.My preferred career is linked to my favourite subjects	479 (47.4)	277 (27.4%)	156 (15.4%)	53 (5.2%)	45 (4.5%)	1010 (8.33%)	8.0
12.Screening leads students towards certain careers	388 (38.4%)	337 (33.4%)	134 (13.3%)	74 (7.3%)	77 (7.6%)	1010 (8.33%)	4.8
Total	2912(24.03%)	3115 (25.7%)	1991 (16.43%)	2087 (17.22%)	2015 (16.63%)	12120 (100%)	

The ratios in Table 4.2 have positively indicated the influence of the school on students' career

choices. Most of the items have ratios above 1 which resembles positive rating in terms of their

influence to students' career choices. Student participants perceived the school as influential to

students' choices of careers. The students indicated that schools influenced their careers mostly through subjects taken and the screening of students that led them to prefer certain careers over others. Former students' careers and career guidance offered in schools were quite influential to students' choices of career. Also critical in influencing students' choices of careers were school career guidance (47.5%), school career explorations and school career decision making activities (46.4%). Table 4.2 shows that school career trips and career days, class teachers, career guidance teachers and school heads were identified as having little influence by most of the students.

4.4.1 Students' responses from open ended questionnaire on school activities to increase career knowledge

A number of activities were raised by student participants. Networking is where students are exposed to the internet where they search for careers and their requirements. Students also look at job adverts and their requirements. One participant described networking:

> **Once every month students are given the computer lab to look for careers that are advertised on internet. Students will link careers with the subjects offered at school. It is the period where students surf for bursaries online and make applications.**

Focus group discussions on careers for different subjects' areas such as Sciences, Arts and Commerce were also raised by a number of student participants. Another important aspect that was raised by students was an issue of collective planning where students and the career guidance teachers sit down and plan the next term's activities.

Career fantasy also came out from students' responses in open ended questions. Career fantasy is when students fantasise careers they want to pursue noting why they prefer them over others. One participant explained career fantasy activities:

During career fantasy, students fantasise the careers they want to pursue and imitating on

what is expected on the job. It is one of the activities that are fascinating and draws a lot

of attention from students.

Other responses included peer career counselling, invitation of resource persons and linking

subjects to careers. Table 4.5 on the next page shows career teachers' responses on school influence.

Table 4.3 Career teachers' responses on school influence (n=20)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1 Career guidance in schools is concerned with clearing students' career confusion	6 (30%)	11 (55%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0	20(9.09%)	8.5
2 Students enjoy career guidance lessons the school provide	4 (20%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	0	20(9.09%)	7.0
3 Location of the school has a bearing on students' choice of careers	5 (25%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)	0	20(9.09%)	2.0
4 Career experts are invited to the school to offer career guidance lessons	3 (15%)	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	5 (15%)	0	20(9.09%)	2.6
5 Students tour different work places as a career exploration	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	5 (15%)	1 (5%)	20(9.09%)	1.5
6 Career guidance helps children acquire knowledge and skills about certain careers	10 (50%)	9 (45%)	0	1 (5%)	0	20(9.09%)	18.9
7 School career guidance widens the students' career horizons	11 (55%)	8 (40%)	0	1 (5%)	0	20(9.09%)	18.8
8 Career guidance in schools positively influence career decision making skills	10 (50%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0	20(9.09%)	16.9
9 Quality of teaching positively influence students' career choice	6 (30%)	7 (35%)	5 (20%)	2 (10%)	0	20(9.09%)	6.5
10 School policies influence career decision making	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	0	20(9.09%)	2.0
11 Mentors in forms of teachers provide students with an introductory aspects of professions	3 (15%)	13 (65%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	0	20(9.09%)	8.0
Total	66 (27.5%)	101 (42.08)	34 (14.1)	37 (154%)	1 (.42%)	240	

The ratios in Table 4.3 above reflect high rating by career guidance teachers on the influence of schools in influencing students' career choices. Career guidance teachers supported the idea that career guidance in schools has for instance an effect on clearing students' career confusion as reflected by the ratios in the Table4.3 above. Career guidance teachers believe that the

school has an influence on the students' careers through career guidance offered in schools. They believe that career guidance widens the students' career decision making and clears confusion. Table 4.3 shows that career guidance teachers saw mentoring (80%) and the invitation of career experts to schools (65%) as influential to students' choice of careers. The table shows that students enjoyed career guidance lessons (70%) and also that career experts were invited to the school to offer career guidance lessons. The quality of teaching was seen as a factor that had an influence on students' choice of careers so the location of schools was found to be influential to students' career choices. School policies (50%) were found by career guidance teachers as having a bearing on students' career choices. Career guidance teachers also indicated that students toured different work places as a career activity. The next section pursues gender issues on career choices.

4.4 GENDER INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICES

The second research question sought to assess the influence of gender on students' career choices.

The following Section presents the findings from the career teachers and high school students on gender influence on career choices. Table 4.4 on the next page presents students' responses on gender influence on career choice.

Table 4.4 Students' response on gender influence (n=1010)

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1.There are careers suitable for men and others suitable for women	139 (13.8%)	233 (23.1%)	183 (18.1%)	199 (19.7%)	256 (25.3%)	1010(12.5%)	0.8
2.Male students have higher career ambitions than girls	112 (11.1%)	169 (16.7%)	173 (17.1%)	227 (22.5%)	329 (32.6%)	1010(12.5%)	0.5
3.Boys and girls were socialized to choose careers that are gender sensitive	117 (11.6%)	200 (19.8%)	254 (25.1%)	226 (22.4%)	213 (21.1%)	1010(12.5%)	0.7
4.Women's role is homemaker and male's role is breadwinner	69 (6.8%)	103 (10.2%)	146 (14.5%)	240 (23.8%)	452 (44.8%)	1010(12.5%)	0.2
5.Boys can use computers more effectively to solve problems than girls	83 (8.2%)	136 (13.5%)	161 (15.9%)	209 (20.7%)	421 (41.7%)	1010(12.5%)	0.3
6.Male models have influenced me to take the career I want to pursue	147 (14.6%)	171 (16.9%)	203 (20.1%)	226 (22.4%)	263 (26.0%)	1010(12.5%)	0.7
7.Female models have influenced me to choose the career I want to do	175 (17.3%)	218 (21.6%)	230 (22.8%)	195 (19.3%)	192 (19%)	1010(12.5%)	1.0
8.I value career advice I get from same sex friends	120 (11.9%)	243 (24.1%)	267 (26.4%)	195 (19.3%)	185 (18.3%)	1010(12.5%)	1.0
Total	962(11.91%)	1473(18.23%)	1617(20.01%)	1717(21.25%)	2311(28.6%)	8080(100%)	

The ratios in the table 4.4 above indicates a weak influence of gender issues on career choices among high school students. Most of the items have ratios below 1 which indicates weak influence. Students did not agree that gender influenced their choices of careers. Students disputed that there were separate careers suitable for men and for women (36.9%) and that male students had higher ambitions than their female counterparts (27.8%). They also disagreed that they were socialised to choose careers along gender lines. Student participants also denied that a woman's role was homemaker and a man's role was breadwinner. Students also disputed that male students use computers earlier than female students. Where gender was seen as influential, female role models (38.9%) were found to be more influential to students' choice of careers as compared to male role models (31.5%). Table 4.5 on the next page shows career counsellors' responses on gender influence on students' career choice

Table 4.5 Career counsellors' responses on gender influence on students' career choice (N=20)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1 Gender influences students' choice of careers	0	7 (35%)	3 (15%)	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	20(10%)	0.7
2 Male students have higher career ambitions compared to girls	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	20(10%)	2.8
3 Girls are competing with boys for careers that were used to be dominated by men	7 (35%)	10 (50%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	0	20(10%)	8.5
4 Boys use computers earlier than girls	4 (20%)	6 (30%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	20(10%)	2.5
5.Boys and girls are socially constructed to be different in terms of careers	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	1 (5%)	20(10%)	1.1
6 Women's role is homemaker and men's role is bread winner	0	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	11 (55%)	6 (30%)	20(10%)	0.1
7 Gender influences career behaviour	1 (5%)	9 (45%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	20(10%)	1.4
8 Women put higher value on careers that are concerned with caring for others	2 (10%)	11 (55%)	2 (10%	5 (15%)	0	20(10%)	2.6
9 There are traditionally male subjects and female dominated subjects	0	10 (50%)	3 (15%)	5 (15%)	2 (10%)	20(10%)	1.4
10 Masculine identity and feminine identity have an impact on career choice	0	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	20(10%)	1.6
Total	17(8.5%)	78(39%)	25(12.5%)	62(31%)	18(9%)	200(100%)	

As reflected by the ratios in Table 4.5, career guidance teachers were in agreement with the students in that gender does not influence students' career choice. Career guidance teachers were positive about girls not influenced by gender in terms of their choices of careers as shown in Table 4.5 above. Table 4.5, indicates that boys and girls compete for careers that were dominated by men (85%). Career guidance teachers agreed that boys and girls are socially constructed to be different in terms of career choices as women preferred careers that are

concerned with caring for others. The table also reflects that there are traditionally male subject and female dominated subjects. On the contrary, career guidance teachers denied that a woman's role was homemaker and a man's role was breadwinner (2%). Career guidance teachers disputed that male students had higher ambitions than female students (50%) and that masculine identity and female identity (45%) had an impact on career choices.

The subsequent section pursues peer influence on students' career choices.

4.5 PEER INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE

The fourth research question focused on the influence of peers on students' choices of careers. This section presents the influence of peers on high school students' career choices. Factors such as peer career education, peer influence on career choice and the importance of career advice from peers, among many other peer aspects, are assessed. Table 4.6 on the next page presents students' response on peer influence on career choice.

Table 4.6 Students' response on peer influence on career choice (n=1010)

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1. Career education comes from other students	293 (29%)	286 (28.3%)	105 (10.4%)	202 (20%)	124 (12.3%)	1010(11.11%)	1.8
2. Peer influence regarding career choice is powerful	200 (19.8%)	312 (30.9%)	236 (23.4%)	146 (14.5%)	116 (11.5%)	1010(11.11%)	1.9
3. My friends have influenced me to choose a career	287 (28.4%)	230 (22.8%)	162 (16.3%)	146 (14.5%)	185 (18.3%)	1010(11.11%)	1.6
4. Peer advice on career guidance was helpful	131 (13%)	324 (32.1%)	230 (22.8%)	198 (19.6%)	127 (12.6%)	1010(11.11%)	1.4
5. My friends validated the career that I chose	100 (9.9%)	253 (25%)	260 (25.7%)	242 (24%)	155 (15.3%)	1010(11.11%)	0.9
6. Information given by my friends is always reliable	55 (5.4%)	188 (18.6%)	244 (24.2%)	300 (29.7%)	223 (22.1%)	1010(11.11%)	0.5
7. I chose a career that is similar to my friends'	43 (4.3%)	159 (17.7%)	161(15.9%)	305 (30.2%)	342 (33.9%)	1010(1.11%)	0.3
8. I embrace the advice I get from peers at face value	76 (7.5%)	271 (26.8%)	271 (26.8%)	216 (21.4%)	176 (17.4%)	1010(11.11%)	0.9
9. My friends give comprehensive and proper advice on careers	144 (14.3%)	269 (26.6%)	333 (33%)	143 (14.2%)	121 (12%)	1010(11.11%)	1.6
Total	1329 (14.6%)	2292 (25.2%)	2002 (22%)	1898 (22%)	1569 (17.3%)	9090(100%)	

The ratios in Table 4.6 above show that peers have positive influence on students' career choices as indicated by the ratios which are above 1 which implies positive rating. The influence of peers was noted by students who participated in the study as shown by the ratios in Table 4.6 above. The majority of the students were agreeable that the kind of information they receive from peers influenced them to choose the careers they wish to pursue and that peer influence was powerful in their choice of careers. The students also agreed that friends gave them comprehensive advice. However, student participants denied that they chose careers that

were similar to their friends (64.1%) and that information given by peers was always reliable (51.8%). Students also disputed the fact that they embrace the advice they received from friends at face value.

4.6.1 Students' responses on other Information that they receive from friends as reflected in the open-ended questions

Students cited the following as the type of information they received from other students: salary related information, working conditions, career opportunities and tertiary institutions that offer careers they wanted to pursue. The students also highlighted negative information they received from their peers, for example, about careers that are non-existent, careers that are not offered in local universities or tertiary colleges, and careers that offer magnified salaries and working conditions. Table 4.7 on the next page presents career teachers' responses on peer advice.

Table 4.7 Career teachers' responses on peer advice (n=20)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Ratio
1 Peer advice on careers is essential to fellow students	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	0	20	14.9
2 The interaction of students is a powerful tool for children to choose certain careers	2 (10%)	14 (70%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	0	20	15.9
3 Students rely on encouragement from students of their age	2 (10%)	12 (60%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	0	20	4.7
4 Entrepreneurship information is more influential if it comes from peers	2 (10%)	7 (35%)	4 (20%)	7 (35%)	0	20	1.1
5 Validation of careers is provided by peers	0	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	20	1.3
6 Information given by peers is always reliable		3 (15%)	1 (5%)	14 (70%)	2 (10%)	20	0,3
7 Peer group pressure influence is sometimes used as pressure to induce young adolescents into predetermined careers	0	10 (50%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	0	20	5.0
8 Female students are more likely to be influenced by peers to choose careers	0	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	8 (40%)	2 (10%)	20	0.5
9 Male students are more likely to be influenced by fellow male students to choose careers	0	8 (40%)	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	2 (10%)	20	1.1
10 Students in peer groups are likely to choose similar careers	1 (5%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	0	20	3.0
11 Career modification comes from peers	2 (10%)	9 (45%)	5 (25%)	4 (20%)	0	20	2.7
12 Peer groups are more likely to accept career advice from members whom they value most	5 (25%)	13 (65%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0	20	17.9
Total	19 (7.9%)	109 (45.42%)	5 (20.83%)	55 (22.92%)	7 (2.92%)	240 (100%)	

Ratios in Table 4.7 indicate that peers influence students' career choices. Most of the

questionnaire items have ratios above 1 which reflects positive rating in terms of peer influence

on students' choice of careers. As reflected by the figures in Table 4.7, career guidance teachers noted that peers have an influence on high school students' career choices. As noted in the table above, peer groups were more likely to accept career advice from members whom they value. Students in peer groups were likely to choose similar careers as the interaction amongst students was said to be powerful in students' choices of careers. It was also noted, as reflected in the table, that peer advice (75%) and encouragement (70%) on careers was essential for fellow students. Career guidance teachers also agreed that career modification comes from students and that validation of careers come from fellow peers. Table 4.7 also reflects that peer group pressure may be used to induce adolescents into predetermined careers. However, career guidance teachers disagreed that information given by peers is always reliable and that entrepreneurship information is more influential if it comes from their peers. Career guidance teachers also denied that female students were more likely to be influenced by peers to choose careers

The next section presents discussion of results.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The present study sought to establish factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students. In this section, the results of the study are discussed under four subheadings, the family influence on career choices, the school influence on students' career choices gender influence on students' career choices and peer influence on students' choices of careers. The discussion of the results is based on both local and international literature.

4.6.1 Family influence on career choices

The study revealed that families influence students' career choices. Most of the students were viewed as coming to school with predetermined careers which may be a result of interacting with the immediate environment and their parents' help in choosing their careers. The result of

the current study on the family influence on children's careers is consistent with previous literature. For example, Ching and Keith (2011:16) in Singapore, Brody et al. (1994:279) in Canada, Marinas et al. (2016:276) in Romania, Baloch and Shah (2014:546), Saleem et al. (2014:841), and Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:811) in Pakistan, Aguado et al. (2015:237) in the Philipines, Obiyo and Eze (2015:26), Egunyewo (2015:28), Abiola (2014:231), Bollu-steve and Sanni (2013:92) and Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) in Nigeria, and Mokoro et al. (2014:1465), Ebwoge and Kibor (2016:478), Simiyu (2015:88), Korrir and Wafula (2012:87), and Edwards and Quinter (2011:82) in Kenya, revealed the family as influential on children's career choices. According to Krumboltz' Social Learning Theory that informs this study, the interactions between children and their parents influence and determine children's behaviour, skills and psychological well-being (Krumboltz, 2009:139).

The current study also revealed that mothers, siblings and fathers are the most influential members of the family as far as students' career choices were concerned. However, the mother was rated to be most influential compared to the father and the siblings. The mother and father's influence was expected as parents are considered models by their children (Van Raden, 2011:37). Previous studies, for example, Hashim and Embong, (2015:68) in Malaysia, Brody et al. (1994:274) in Canada, and Bates (2015:69) and Ogunyewo et al. (2015:28) in Nigeria, also confirm that the mother is more influential as compared to the father. Although students may have a say in which schools to attend, parents' contributions towards their children's choices of schools is likely to outweigh the children's.

Parents are more likely to consider their experience and knowledge of careers as a starting point in choosing the appropriate schools that nurture their children towards certain careers. They are also likely to influence their children through discussions which are biased towards certain careers. Results of the study also revealed that parents can create interest of certain careers in

their children. The study, as reflected by career guidance teachers, confirms an existing body of knowledge about parents' strong participation in creating career interest in their children. Parents were found to influence their children on career choices, for example, Baines (2009:48) in England, and Duffy and Dik (2009:33), Trusty et al. (2005:139) and Fisher and Padmawidjaja (1999:145) in America. The current study also confirms previous findings that purported that parents have a strong influence on their children's career choices, for example, Letha (2012:69) and Meikle (2008:11) in India, Wong and Lui (209:92) in China, Hashim and Embong (2015:68) in Malaysia, Fizer (2013:28) in America, Walaba and Kiboss (2013:12) in Kenya, Egunjobi et al. (2013:301), Igbinedion (2011:335), and Esters and Bowen (2005:32) in Nigeria, Amani (2013:191) in Tanzania, Shumba and Naong (2012:175) in South Africa and Mutekwe et al. (2011:140) in Zimbabwe.

It emerged from the study that older siblings influenced students' choices of careers because older siblings' experiences may have an effect on younger siblings. The finding is consistent with Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:841) in Pakistan and Aguado et al. (2015:237) in the Philipines who purported that siblings influence students' choices of careers.

The current study revealed that other family members were also likely to be identified as role models by students. This is in line with Bandura's Cognitive Social Learning Theory that emphasises the influence of role models in the development of career choices (Mills, 2009:10; Bandura 1988:19). As a child grows in the family, they may identify family members who inspire them even in their choices of careers. This assertion is in line with previous studies such as Amani (2013:191) in Tanzania and Braza and Guillo (2015:83), Ogunyewo et al. (2015:28), and Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) in Nigeria where relatives were found to influence students' choices of careers. Children hold their parents and other family members in high regard and are likely to see them as role models especially those who are successful. Siblings, as well as

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other extended family members, may be regarded as role models by adolescents in high school as well (Van Raden, 2011:37).

It emerged from this study that parental influence also comes in different forms which include parental actions, parental values and beliefs, parental connectedness and expectations. The way the parents talk about careers is likely to have a bearing on how children choose careers. The bias of the language and the emphasis when talking about particular careers over others could lead a child to choose a certain career. This is line with Palos and Drobot (2010:341) who stated that children's career decisions are modelled by family members through their actions and psychological support. A study in Canada by Brody et al. (1994:279) also found that parental values and beliefs influence children's career choices.

The current study also revealed that parental education has a positive influence on children's choices of careers in several ways. This is consistent with a study carried out by Pfingst (2015:91) in Australia that purported that parental education has a positive influence on children's careers and other studies, for example, Dustman (2004:227) in Germany, Uka (2015:212) in Albania and Abiola (2014:231) in Nigeria.

The study also revealed that mothers and fathers' careers had an impact on their children's choice of careers. This finding is consistent with previous studies such as Bakshi et al. (2012:13) in India. While both fathers and mothers' careers were found to be influential, fathers' careers were dominant. Similar results were obtained by Bates (2015:69) and Abiola (2014:231) in Nigeria where both the mothers and fathers' careers were considered important. The mother's career was highly rated by student participants. This may be because the mother nurtures the children and has a significant influence on many aspects of life, including careers. Children are likely to take career advice from their mothers who are professionals or who work over those who do not. Professionals in the family are likely to influence students' career

choices if the family member's profession is considered as beneficial and prestigious by the student.

It also emerged from this study that a family business had no influence on students' choices of careers. The current study contradicts a study by Schroder, Schmitt-Rodermund and Arnaud (2011:116) in Germany that emphasised the contribution of a family business as a motivator for children to pursue certain careers. This may be because the German participants have family business links. It may have been possible that those who participated in the present study did not have family businesses to influence them towards certain careers. A study by Aslam et al. (2012:120) in Pakistan reflected that, if the parental experiences were positive, the parents would encourage their children to do careers that support the business but if their entrepreneurial experiences were negative, parents would discourage their children to pursue the same career pathways.

Extended family members had impact on students' choices of careers as revealed by student participants. These members included grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. The proximity to such people may have a bearing on students' choices of careers. This finding is in line with Araujo and Taveira (2009:59) who found that other family members influence students' choices of careers. Other studies (Marinas, Igret & Prioteasa, 2016:276; Ogunyewo et al., 2015:28) also reinforced the above findings which revealed the influence of family members on students' choices of careers.

Data revealed that students who could not separate effectively from their parents were not free to make independent career decisions and that the bond between children and parents influenced their children's choice of careers. Children who have strong relationships with their parents do not want to disappoint their parents by going against their wishes. The results are

consistent with Bates (2015:68) in Nigeria who intimated that the child/parent relationship is influential on students' choices of careers.

The next part discusses the school influence on high school students' career choices.

4.6.2 School influence on students' career choices

The study revealed that the school had a bearing on students' career choices. The school environment has the potential to share career issues through career guidance and other school activities. The results are in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which emphasises the influence of environmental factors such as career counselling (Lent & Worthington, 2000:37). This finding is also in tandem with early studies such as Naz et al. (2014:1194) in Pakistan, Li et al. (2010:11) in China, Pendergrass (2008:70) in America, Amoah et al. (2015:64) in Ghana, Edwards and Quinter (2011:84) in Kenya that established the importance of schools in preparing students for careers. Schools instil career knowledge through the career guidance services they offer. The finding on the influence of schools on students' career choices is in line with current studies like Sun and Yuen (2012:204) in China, Mghweno et al. (2014:13), and Obiunu and Ebunu (2013:113) in Nigeria, Shumba and Naong (2012:176) in South Africa, Kimiti and Mwova (2012:359) and Lazarus and Chinwe (2011:58) in Kenya where school career guidance was found to influence students' career choices.

Career guidance teacher participants in the present study agreed that career guidance positively widens the horizons of students in high schools, helps in career decision making and the quality of teaching and school policies were critical in influencing career choices. The above observations are consistent with previous literature, for example, Aguado et al. (2015:237) in the Philipines, Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:811) in Pakistan, Ferreira and Lima (2010:298) in Portugal, Gati, Amir and Landman (2010:393) in Israel, Rowland (2004:10) in the Bahamas, Flores and Obasi (2005:160), and Watts and Sultana (2004:111) in America, Kimiti and

Mwova (2012:366) in Kenya, Shumba and Naong (2012:171) in South Africa and Petters and Asuquo (2009:211) in Nigeria, which emphasised that the quality of teaching increases career horizons.

The study also revealed that career guidance in schools helps students understand career issues such as the subjects to do to pursue a certain career. Career guidance in schools has the potential to communicate important career issues. The above finding concurred with previous studies, for example, Faiter and Faiter (2013:13) in America, Kimiti and Mwova (2012:2014), and Edwards and Quinter (2011:84) in Kenya, Mghweno et al. (2014:13) in Tanzania, Gbenga and Toyin (2014:59) in Nigeria and Shumba and Naong (2012:171) in South Africa, that have established that career guidance helps students gain knowledge about careers.

The study further revealed that teachers and mentors play a pivotal role in career guidance. This is in tandem with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory which emphasises teaching students to make career decisions (Schonorr & Ware, 2001:36). Career guidance teachers in the current study rated highly the influence of teachers and mentors in assisting students to choose careers. This is in line with literature such as Fried and MacCleave (2009:49), Zayas and McGuigan (2006:1529), and Flores and Obasi (2005:147) in America, Kelechi et al. (2013:166), Ogunyewo et al. (2015:28) and Durosaro and Nohu (2012:144) in Nigeria, and Kimiti and Mwova (2012:359) and Migunde et al. (2012:235) in Kenya which supports the importance of teachers and mentors in assisting students in their choices of careers. Several other studies such as Gati et al. (2010:393) and Bardick et al. (2004:114) in America, Mghweno et al. (2014:58) in Kenya, Walaba and Kiboss (2013:12) in Nigeria, and Chireshe (2012a:306) in Zimbabwe, also established the positive influence of career guidance teachers on students' choices of careers. Student participants in the current study underrated the influence of teachers and mentors in their career choices. The possible reason why career guidance teachers and

students differed on the influence of teachers and mentors could be that career guidance teachers in schools steer career guidance activities. However, students' perceptions about the influence of career guidance teachers is also consistent with studies by Salami and Salami (2013:40) and Durosaro and Nohu (2012:144) in Nigeria that established that career guidance teachers had little influence on students' choices of careers.

The study also revealed that former students' careers and the students' favourite subjects had an influence on students' choices of careers. Students are likely to follow other students from the same school. If they find that the past students are doing well in their careers, they may emulate those students by taking similar subject combinations and engaging in similar school activities as those done by the former students. The result of the current study is in agreement with previous studies, for example, Naz et al. (2014:1194) in Pakistan, Bossman (2014:47) in Ghana and Mutekwe and Modiba (2012: 290) and Mutekwe et al. (2011:140) in Zimbabwe, which established that former students' careers were influential in their choices of careers.

Career guidance teachers in this study revealed that geographical location of the school had an effect on students' choices of careers. This finding concurs with literature, for example, Rowland (2004:9) in the Bahamas and Chemeli (2013:357) in Kenya, which highlight the effect of geographical location of the school with regard to career choices, particularly in urban areas. Careers such as engineering, computer science may be more popular with urban scholars than rural scholars since there are few engineers located in the rural areas.

Student participants in the current study revealed that field trips had no influence on their choices of careers. Contrary to the above findings, studies by Prokop, Tuncer and Kvasnicak (2007:253) in Czechoslovakia, Behrandt and Frankline (2014:13), and Higgins et al. (2012:175) in the United Kingdom, Shakil et al. (2011:14) in Pakistan, Nabors, Edwards and Murray (2006:666) in America and Amoah et al. (2015:64) in Ghana found that field trips are

critical to the students' choices of careers. The lack of influence of field trips to high school students' career choices in this study is a surprising finding, given the influence of such trips in the literature. Possibly, in the current study, schools were poorly managing field trips to the extent that students found them unappealing with regard to their influence in career choices.

Class teachers and career guidance teachers were cited by student participants as having little influence on their career choices. These findings contradict earlier findings (Aguado et al., 2015:237; Amoah et al., 2015:64; Kimiti & Mwova, 2012:364) that reveal the positive influence of career guidance teachers and class teachers. A possible explanation on the contradiction between literature and findings of the current study could be the way career guidance in Zimbabwe is executed. Teachers should exhibit knowledge of the subject area to the satisfaction of the students. In the absence of such knowledge, students are not inspired by such teachers. Most of the career guidance teachers in Zimbabwe have no training in career guidance.

The next section discusses the influence of gender on high school students' choices of careers

4.6.3 Gender influence on career choices

It emerged from the study that gender had no significant influence on career choices. Both career guidance teachers and student participants rated lowly the notion that boys had higher ambitions when compared to girls. The above finding contradicts previous literature, for example, Morales et al. (2016:77) in the Philippines, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012:174) in South Africa, Durosaro and Adebanke (2012:12) and Igbinedion (2011:335) in Nigeria, Simiyu (2015:88), Mishkin et al. (2016:229), and Njeri (2013: 46) in Kenya and Mutekwe et al. (2011:140) in Zimbabwe that established that gender has a significant influence on students' choices of careers. The difference in the findings from this study could emanate from the current teaching in both schools and social circles on gender parity. There could be a paradigm

shift from gender segregation in terms of careers as women are moving towards careers that were dominated by men.

Although career guidance teachers were agreeable on both male and female students competing for the same jobs, career guidance teachers in the present study insisted that gender role socialization was still an issue as girls and boys were socialized to be different regarding career choice. The finding that male and female students compete for same jobs is in contrast with many previous studies for instance, Griffin et al. (2011:177), Behrend et al. (2007:2) in America, Durosaro and Adebanke (2012:112) and Ahuja et al. (2006:20) in Nigeria, that established that men and women had different roles and gender was still a force in determining career choices. Both career guidance teachers and student participants rated lowly the notion that women are considered homemakers and men are breadwinners. Corrigall and Konrad (2007:847) in America clearly outlined how the environment distinguishes the roles of women and men. The difference between the current study and previous literature shows that current teaching deviates from the previous teaching or socialisation where gender specific roles were emphasised.

The study also revealed that female role models influenced students' career choices. According to Social Cognitive Theory, which informs the current study, when role models of the same gender exhibit stylistic behaviours which are different from those shown by other gender role models, children pattern their behaviour after the same gender rather than the other gender models (Bussey & Bandura, 1999:19). Bandura further purported that role models, in the form of teachers, parents, siblings and other people in society, can affect career choices (Mills, 2009:10). Student participants in the present study indicated that they were more influenced by female role models than they were influenced by male role models. This confirms the study by Mishkin et al (2016:227) who purported that female models were more influential than their

male counterparts even though the literature points to male role models being more influential than female role models. The shift from male role models to female role models could be as a result of the emphasis in both academic and social circles on gender equality. This is in line with Bussey and Bandura (1999:19) who stated that, through modelling and the structuring of social activities, children learn the prototype behaviours associated with each of the sexes. Hence the perception that female role models are influential. However, studies by Koech et al. (2016:61 and Njeri (2013:45) in Kenya showed that both male and females role models influenced students' choices of careers.

Student participants in the study rated lowly the influence of gender on their choices of careers. On the contrary, career guidance teachers agreed that girls put a higher value on careers that are concerned with caring for others. The generation gap between students and career guidance teachers could possibly explain the inconsistencies between the two groups of participants. The view of career guidance teachers in the present study is consistent with previous studies, for example, Griffin et al. (2011:177) and Tang et al., (2008:285) in the Netherlands, Favara (2012:30) in America, and Andsager and Hust (2005:89) in England which purported that female students were more inclined to careers that cared for others. However, contrary to the career guidance teachers' beliefs that gender has an influence on career choice, a study by Miliszewska and Sztendur (2010:257) in Australia reflected a positive attitude of females towards traditionally male dominated careers such as ICT.

The following section discusses the influence of peers on students' career choices.

4.6.4 Peer influence on students' career choices

It emerged from this study that peers influence students' career choices. This is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which purports that peers are sources of social learning as they model and sanction styles of conduct and serve as comparative references for appraisal and validation of personal efficacy (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Other students and friends were seen as providing career education likely to influence their peers. The above assertion is consistent with previous studies such as Hashim and Embong (2015:81) in Malaysia, and Kimiti and Mwova (2012:364), Migunde et al. (2012:23) and Alika (2010b:179) in Kenya who established that career education emanates from peers.

The current study revealed that career education which comes from peers and friends was influential in students' choices of careers. As students interact with peers and friends, they share important information on career choices. Career guidance teachers were in agreement with student participants as they reinforced that career advice from friends was influential to students' choices of careers. This finding is consistent with Kiuru (2008:34) in Finland, Abbasi and Sarwat (2014:811) and Naz et al. (2014:1196) in Pakistan and Okiror and Otabong (2015:18) in Uganda who purported that friends and peers influence students' choices of careers.

Career guidance teachers in this study revealed that both male and female students were likely to be influenced by peers in choosing careers. There was no gender segregation on the influence of peers. In other words, both boys and girls were equally influenced by peers in their choice of careers. Such findings are consistent with Hashim and Embong (2015:255) in Malaysia, and Kimiti and Mwova (2012:366) in Kenya who argued that boys and girls are influenced by peers in choosing careers.

Career guidance teachers in this study espoused that students' interactions with their peers was a powerful tool in their quest to choose careers. Students are likely to share important career information during these interactions. The finding of the current study that students' interactions with peers was a powerful tool in choosing careers is in tandem with previous studies, for instance, Fizer (2013:28) in America, Okiror and Otabong (2015:18) in Uganda, Walaba and Kiboss (2013:12) in Kenya and Igbinedion (2011:335) in Nigeria that revealed that peer interaction influenced students' choices of careers.

Career guidance teachers in the current study further revealed that students rely on encouragement from fellow students. Peer encouragement may influence students to continue with their careers. The finding of the current study is in tandem with previous studies such as Bates (2015:69) and Taylor et al. (2004:2) in America and Shumba and Naong (2012:171) in South Africa which purported that students in schools rely heavily on their peers' encouragement on career selection. Peer encouragement is likely to have a bearing on students' choices of careers. This is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which informs the current study which purports that encouragement through social persuasion encourages individuals to attempt certain careers (Mills, 2009:10). Bandura (1988:285) also asserted that realistic encouragement leads to greater effort.

Career guidance teachers revealed that peer group pressure induces adolescents into predetermined careers. Peer group pressure is beneficial if it conveys proper career information but harmful if it brings incorrect information about certain careers which may lead other students to take certain careers. The result of the study concurs with previous studies such as Naz et al. (2014:1195) in Pakistan, Goethner et al. (2009:25) in Germany, Koech et al. (2016:61), Njeri (2013:45) and Migunde et al. (2012:235) in Kenya and Egunjobi et al.

(2013:301) in Nigeria which stated that peer group influence is used as a pressure group to influence career decisions.

Student participants in this study revealed that peer advice on career guidance was helpful in their choices of careers. Students are more likely to accept career advice from peers they trust than any other sources. Peer advice may clarify certain issues regarding careers. The study also revealed that friends give comprehensive and proper advice regarding careers in common language to perpetuate career information. Senior students at schools may share their experiences on career information that they received from their predecessors. According to Social Cognitive Theory that informs this study, advice from former successful students has an impact on students' career choices (Mills, 2009). The above revelation about peer advice confirms previous studies such as Faiter and Faiter (2013:113) in America, Goethner et al. (2009:25) in Germany, Naz et al. (2014:1194) in Pakistan, Njeri (2013:45), and Kimiti and Mwova (2012:364) in Kenya, Shumba and Naong (2012:171) in South Africa, and Egunjobi et al. (2013:302) in Nigeria which revealed that students embrace career decisions that come from their peers.

Student participants in the present study rated lowly the notion that their careers were validated by their peers and that information they got from their friends was always right. This may be because they may not have consulted their colleagues to assess their contribution in validating their careers. Such validations may come through informal discussions. The results of the current study are inconsistent with a study by in South Africa that shows that validation of the students' choices of careers comes from fellow students. The possible explanation of these differences could be caused by the participants in Shumba and Naong's (2012) study which were university students while the current study used high school students.

Student participants in the current study also rated lowly the notion that they chose careers that were similar to their friends' choices. However, career guidance teachers noted that students were likely to choose careers that were similar to those of their friends. The difference in career teachers and students' perceptions in the view that students choose careers that are similar to their peers, may arise as a result of different experiences. Career guidance teachers may have witnessed this over time during their tenure at school. The students may not be aware that their career choices are similar to their colleagues' choices. Previous studies, for instance, Goethner et al. (2009:25) in Germany, Naz et al. (2014:94) in Pakistan and Koech et al. (2016:61) in Kenya are in agreement with career guidance teachers who purported that students choose careers that are similar to their peers.

It also emerged from this study that peers influence students' career choices through career behaviour modification. Career guidance teachers rated favourably that students' career behaviours are modified by their peers. Students are likely to join high school with certain careers in mind but may change careers due to their interaction with their peers who give them comprehensive career information. The result of the current study is consistent with previous studies such as Hashim and Embong (2015:810) in Malaysia, and Edwards and Quinter (2011:255) in Kenya that revealed that career behaviours are likely to be modified by peers.

Career guidance teachers in the present study revealed that entrepreneurship information is more influential if it comes from peers. The decision to become an entrepreneur was guided by the expectations and wishes of peers. The results of the study are in line with Goethner et al. (2009:25) in Germany that explained the importance of peers in communicating entrepreneurship as a career.

4.7 SUMMARY

The preceding chapter presented data collected from high school students and career guidance teachers on factors that influence career choices. Data was presented in the form of tables and figures. Interpretation and discussion of the results were also done in this chapter.

The next chapter presents summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The present study sought to establish factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. In the present chapter, the context of the problem presented in Chapter 1 is reiterated; the summary of literature, research methodology and the findings on each sub research question are presented. This chapter also presents the conclusions of the study and recommendations for the improvement of career guidance in schools. It further presents a proposed model for career guidance of students in high schools. The chapter ends with the presentation of matters regarding areas for further studies.

5.2 A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

As revealed in Chapter 1, career decisions are so complex that many people require assistance in exploring alternatives and weighing the consequences associated with various options (Ajufo, 2013:312; Durosaro & Adebanke, 2012:111; Mahlangu, 2011:239; Eyo et al., 2010:87; Hiebert, 2009:13). Students choose careers as they interact with different objects in their environment but may get confused so that they leave high school without having chosen a career (Hiebert, 2009:13; Manuel & Asuquo, 2009:135). Several studies, for example, in Mexico (Chow & Ngo, 2002:16; Ojeda & Flores, 2008:91), in America (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004:396; Gordon, 2000:49), in Nigeria (Omoni, 2013:30; Ajufo, 2013:313; Eyo, 2011:338; Eyo et al., 2010:88; Petters & Asuquo, 2009:211), in Malawi (Maluwa-Banda, 1998:294) and in South Africa (Mahlangu, 2011:294), have concentrated on the implementation and challenges of career guidance and counselling in schools but not on factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students.

As reflected in Chapter 1, although many Zimbabwean studies (Chireshe, 2012a:306; Mapfumo, et al., 2002:163) investigated career issues, to the knowledge of the researcher, they did not look at factors that influence career choices. The results of the current study can help career guidance teachers in schools enhance their effectiveness in guiding the students towards careers taking into cognisance factors such as the influence of family, schools, gender and peers that make them choose careers.

Chapter 1 indicated that students need to be guided from a well-informed perspective. Career guidance becomes a tool that can be used to help students choose careers. It comprises a wide range of processes designed to engender informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development (Watts & Kidd, 2000:488). High schools in Zimbabwe offer career guidance to students but students continue to have problems choosing a career when they join colleges and universities. As indicated in Chapter 1, guidance and counselling services are meant to enable learners in institutions of learning to derive optimal educational benefits to utilise their potential (Eyo et al., 2010:88). The present study sought to establish the factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe to assist career guidance teachers in their endeavours to help students choose careers.

5.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature revealed that family, school, gender and peers were influential in students' choices of careers. For example, Korrir and Wafula (2012:87), Clutter (2010:12), Edwards and Quinter (2011:82), Qin (2010:81), Barker (2010:6), Zayas and McGuigan (2006:529), and Adya and Keiser (2005:247) established that the family influences students' choices of careers. The literature also revealed that, in Singapore (Alika, 2010b:180; Ching & Keith, 2011:6), in Germany (Dustman, 2004:227), in America (Ma & Yeh, 2010:241), in Hong Kong (Law &

Yeun, 2011:61), in Malaysia (Hashim & Embong, 2015:81), in Nigeria (Bollu-steve & Sanni, 2013:92; Egunjobi et al., 2013:302) and in Zimbabwe (Mapfumo et al. 2002:163), family played a role in students' choices of careers.

The influence of the school on students' choices of careers was also noted in the literature, for instance, Obiunu and Ebunu (2013:113), Kimiti and Mwova (2012:359), Sun and Yuen (2012:204), Shumba and Naong (2012:171), Migunde et al. (2012:236), Mghweno et al. (2014:13), and Flores and Obasi (2005:147). Geographical location of the school were found to be influential for instance, Flores and Obasi (2005:147), Perna et al. (2008:140). Literature also acknowledged the influence of career guidance, for example, Dabula and Makura (2013:95), Balin and Hirschi (2010:165), and Rowland (2004:10). Teachers were also found to be influential, for instance, Migunde et al. (2012:235), Shumba and Naong (2012:171), Zayas and McGuigan (2006:1529).

Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012:174), Durosaro and Adebanke (2012:12), Tang et al. (2008:191), Ahuja et al. (2006:20), Fisher and Padmawidjaja (1999:148) established that gender influenced career choices of high school students. Studies in America (Griffin et al. 2011:177; Behrend et al., 2007:4; Dellan & David, 2004:37) established that gender beliefs may influence students to choose careers based on gender. A study in the Netherlands (Klapwijk & Rommes, 2009:405) confirmed the influence of gender on students' career choices. In Nigeria (Durosaro & Adebanke, 2012:112; Ahuja et al., 2006:20), gender was found to be significant in guiding students towards certain careers. A Zimbabwean study (Mapfumo, et al. (2002:161) also established the influence of gender on the choices of careers among high school students.

Peers were also revealed in the literature as having an influence on students' career choices. Several international studies as reflected in the literature (Migunde et al., 2012:235; Ching &

Yong, 2011:16; Kacperczky, 2012:16 Alika, 2010b:179; Hiebert, 2009:7; Borgen & Hiebert, 2006:390; Ching & Yong, 2011:16; Kacperczky, 2012:16) established that peers influence high school students' choices of careers.

5.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the influence of the above mentioned factors, the Research Methodology in Chapter 3 dealt with the issue of the positivism paradigm methodology. Data was collected using the quantitative approach. A survey design was used to collect the data. A sample of 1010 students and 20 career guidance teachers participated in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

5.5.1 Sub-research question 1: Family influence on career choice

It emerged from this study that family influences career choices among high school students in Zimbabwe. The study revealed that both mothers and fathers influence their children in their choice of careers. The study also revealed that parents can create career interests in their children. It also emerged from this study that parental influence comes in different forms such as parental actions, parental values and beliefs, parental connectedness and expectations. The current study further showed that the level of parental education has a positive influence on children's choices of careers. Mothers and fathers' careers also had an impact on their children's choices of careers. It also emerged from this study that family businesses had no influence on students' choices of careers.

5.5.2 Sub-research question 2: School influence on career choice

The present study revealed that schools influence career choices among high school students. Career guidance lessons students receive from career guidance teachers have a bearing on

students' choices of careers. It emerged from the current study that class teachers and former students also play a pivotal role in students' choices of careers. The study also revealed that the geographical location of the school plays a significant role in students' choices of careers

5.5.3 Sub-research question 3: Gender influence on career choice

It emerged from the current study that gender does not influence career choices among high school students. Both male and female students compete for the same careers. There is no difference between the subjects done by girls and by boys that lead them to the choice of different careers. It also emerged from the current study that both male and female role models influence students in their choices of careers.

5.5.4 Sub-research question 4: Peer influence on career

The present study revealed that peers influence career choices of high school students. Career education comes from other students as students interact formally or informally. Friends or other students encourage learners to pursue certain careers. It also emerged from the study that peer advice on careers is a significant factor when students choose careers. The study also revealed that entrepreneurship as a career is effective when it comes from peers.

The next part presents conclusions of the study.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The essence of the study was to establish factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in Zimbabwe. As reflected by the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the family has a significant role in influencing students' career choices. Parental education and careers, parental encouragement and advice are critical in students' choices of careers.

It can also be concluded that schools play a pivotal role in students' choices of careers. Career guidance, career guidance teachers, class teachers, the subjects students do at school and the location of the school were found to influence students' choices of careers.

It can also be concluded that gender has no influence in students' choices of careers. The findings of the study revealed that both male and female students were interested in the same careers and are equally competent in the subjects they do at school. Both male and female role models are influential in students' choices of careers.

The study further concluded that peers have a significant role in students' choices of careers. Peer advice and encouragement, as reflected by the study, are important in students' choices of careers.

The subsequent section presents the contribution of the study.

5.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The current study on factors influencing the choices of careers of high school students may be the first of its kind to be carried out in Zimbabwe. The study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge as it investigated the factors that influence the choices of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. Career guidance teachers and teachers in general can benefit from the findings of the current study by enriching their knowledge and skills on implementing career guidance issues.

The study may be used by other researchers in the same field or similar fields as a baseline study or a spring board to their studies. The government of Zimbabwe may also benefit from the current study when designing a career guidance curriculum for both high and primary schools.

The next section presents recommendations.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study on factors influencing the career choices of students, the following recommendations, from both the literature review and the findings from the empirical study, are made:

5.8.1 Policy and legislation

There is a need to review the career guidance curriculum to consider factors that influence students' choices of careers. There should be a paradigm shift from the career guidance teacher as the sole provider of career guidance in schools. It is therefore recommended that clear policy on who should teach career guidance and the actual provision of career guidance in schools be put in place. The policy would cover aspect such as:

a) mandatory training of career guidance teachers,

b) introducing a compulsory module in teachers training colleges that will assist teachers to effectively guide students towards their careers,

c)   parental involvement in guiding students towards their careers,

d) consultation with students, parents and industry when designing career guidance syllabus,

e) availing resources, both financial and material, to enable the schools to implement career guidance activities in schools.

5.8.2 Practice

5.8.2.1 Planning

Career guidance activities, including field trips which are critical in marrying theory to practice, need to be planned prior to the opening of schools. If field trips are poorly organised, they will

not benefit the students. It is therefore recommended that field trips be part of career guidance activities and be planned well in advance for them to be effective.

5.8.2.2 School career guidance teachers' training

It is recommended that career guidance teachers be trained to equip them with necessary skills that enhance teaching in the classroom. Teachers' colleges and universities should comprehensively train their students in career guidance to enable them to be competent when engaging their students in career guidance activities. It is further recommended that staff development of career guidance teachers be prioritised to enhance competitiveness of teachers when executing their duties as career guidance practitioners.

5.8.2.3 Training of parents' career guidance skills

Since parental involvement is inevitable, the current study recommends that parents be trained in career guidance. Special community programmes, initiated by the schools, may be organised to help parents guide their children. Universities and other institutions of tertiary learning may introduce short courses on career guidance. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education may prepare literature on career guidance on pamphlets that would be distributed to parents.

5.8.2.4 Training of peers

It is important that peers receive training in career guidance. Peer training may be done in schools. As students receive career guidance in schools, activities such as peer training may be introduced where students are trained to help fellow students in career guidance. Such initiatives may include career guidance and field trip organisation. Libraries should be equipped with literature that helps learners to gain insight in career guidance.

5.8.3 The proposed career guidance model

To facilitate the implementation of the recommendations given above, a career guidance model is proposed below.
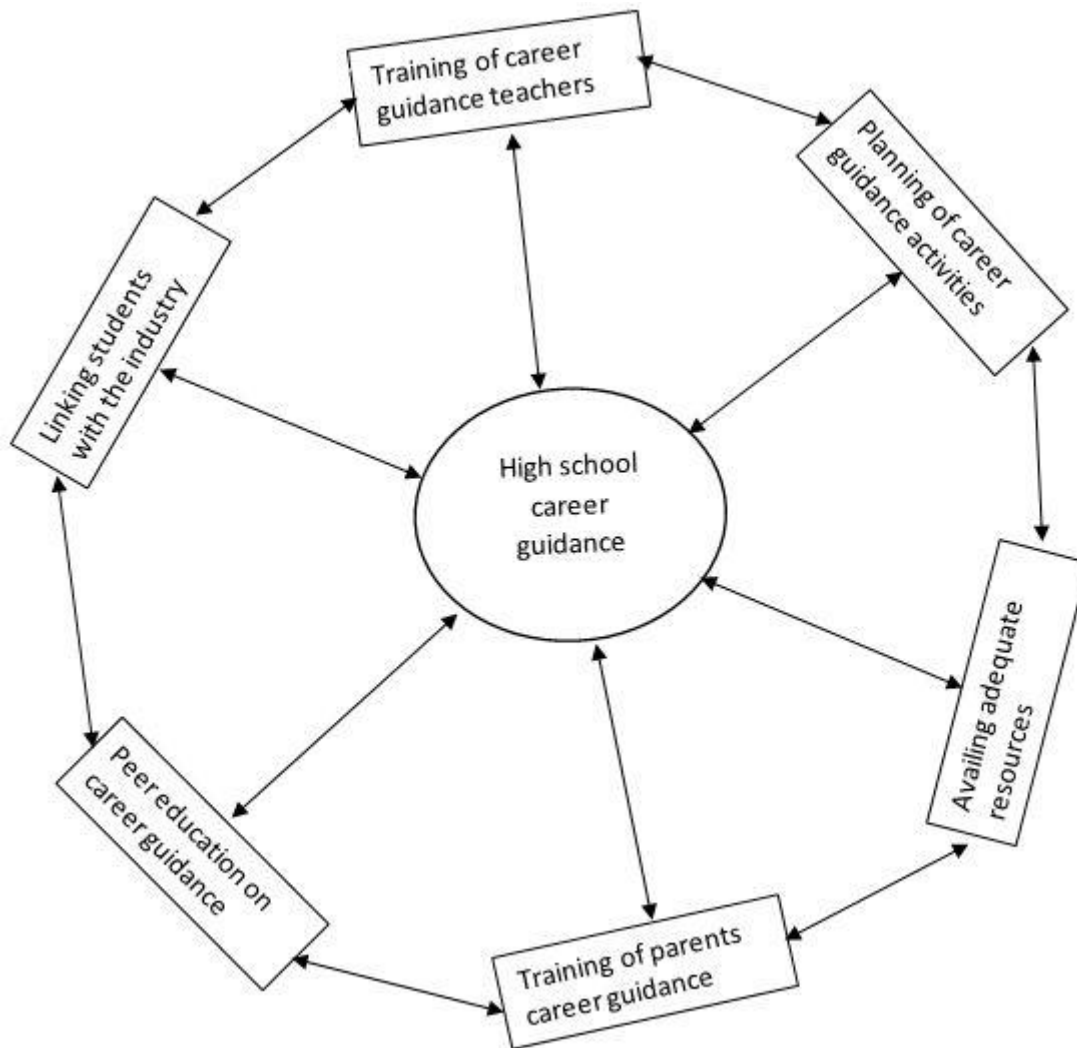
Fig 5.1 Proposed career guidance model

5.8.4.1 Component 1: Training of career guidance teachers

Consistent with studies in America (Flores & Obasi, 2005:160), in Nigeria (Eyo, 2011:338) and in Tanzania (Mghweno et al., 2014:13) where career guidance teachers were found to be influential in the choices of careers among high school students, career guidance teachers need to go through vigorous training to prepare them for proper execution of school career guidance.

Teachers colleges and universities that train teachers should impart knowledge on the proper way of teaching career guidance in schools. Teachers who have an interest in guiding students towards careers should be offered a diploma or a degree in career guidance. This will improve the quality of career guidance offered in schools. Such teachers should not be given classes to teach so they can concentrate on their jobs as career guidance teachers. The training of career guidance teachers is in line with the Social Learning Theory that informs the current study which emphasises the importance of training students. Krumboltz (2009:135) emphasises that career counsellors should teach their clients the importance of engaging in a variety of interesting and beneficial activities, ascertaining their reactions, remaining alert to alternative opportunities and learning skills for succeeding in each new activity.

5.8.4.2 Component 2: Planning of career guidance activities

Career guidance activities should be planned by teachers in preparation for the coming term the same way that other subjects are planned. This is in line with Watters (2010:222) in Australia, *The Yorkshire Times* (2012:2) in England and Chemeli (2013:357) in Kenya where planning in career guidance was found to be critical. Such an initiative would enable career guidance teachers to prepare for career guidance activities before schools open. Planning reduces errors and promotes efficiency. Well planned activities supported by concrete media and other tangible resources such as facilitators would enhance proper learning as reinforced in the Social Cognitive Theory that informs this study. According to Social Cognitive Theory, socially-guided learning encourages self-directed learning by providing children with the conceptual tools needed to gain new knowledge and to deal intelligently with the varied situations they encounter in their everyday lives (Bandura, 1989:13).

In America (Behrandt & Frankline, 2014:13) and in Ireland (Higgins, Dewhurst & Watkins, 2012:224), field trips were found to influence students in choosing careers. The planning of

field trips should be done well in advance, taking students' needs into consideration. Students need to be consulted regarding areas to visit and be told the reasons for such trips. Arrangements with the people who will facilitate learning at these places must be ascertained before embarking on such trips. Field trips allow the students to meet with the personnel already in practice. Managing field trips is also important as it involves the actual tours and learning that takes place during these trips.

School career days may be organised by schools in collaboration with students and parents. Colleges and universities should be invited to schools to explain to students the careers they offer and possible job markets. If these are well planned, they may enrich the students regarding their careers. Students would tour different college or university stands erected at the school during career days and consult about their careers

5.8.4.3 Component 3: Availing adequate resources

For career guidance to be effective, resources, both financial and material, should be availed in high schools. Adequate financial resources enable career guidance to put in place materials and activities that enhance proper learning. The use of teaching and learning media in accomplishing objectives in teaching should be a priority. Teaching and learning media can only be made available if school career guidance in schools is fully funded. Facilitation of active learning through funding is in line with the Social Learning Theory which advocates the importance of availing financial support to particular training options (Lent, 2005:37).

5.8.4.4 Component 4: Training of parents

Parents are important in articulating career issues. In line with Social Learning Theory which informs this study, Krumboltz emphasises the establishment of a comprehensive career development system which includes parents and other stakeholders (Learning, 2001:1). This

system provides for a framework of action that emphasises the enhancement of participants through the training of stakeholders. It is therefore recommended that parents be exposed to career guidance skills to properly guide their children towards careers. The training of parents may involve issues such as supporting their children's choices of careers or moulding their children towards certain careers. The training of parents may increase their children's knowledge about careers and job markets which is in tandem with the Social Cognitive Theory that informs the present study.

5.8.4.5 Component 5: Peer education on career guidance

Consistent with the Social Cognitive Theory that informs this study, peer education is critical to secure desired outcomes in learning. Since peers serve as a major agency for the development and validation of self-efficacy, disrupted or impoverished peer relationships can adversely affect the growth of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1989:65). It is recommended that peers be equipped with career guidance skills in order to help their colleagues in career guidance issues. The training of peers may be done at school in their last lessons in career guidance. Career guidance teachers may design a training programme that will teach students to help fellow colleagues. This may include passing of information from informed and reliable sources, counselling and encouragement skills which is consistent with the Social Cognitive Theory which emphasises teaching career skills.

5.8.4.6 Component 6: Linking students with industry

In line with the Social Learning Theory that informs this study which states that obtaining occupational information from a well informed source is important to career decision making, it is recommended that students be linked to people already in the industry who are engaged in the careers they desire to pursue. Career guidance teachers should collect contacts they would give to students according to their desired careers. Such people may help in mentoring students

and linking them with other important people, colleges and universities that would train them in the careers they wish to pursue. This is in accordance with the Social Cognitive Theory which states that, in their efforts to develop their cognitive competencies, people draw on their own experiences and turn to others who are well informed on the matters of concern (Bandura, 1989:13). It is therefore recommended that students be linked to professionals already employed in the same careers they wish to pursue.

5.9.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following are recommendations from the current study as informed by the findings of the study:

The current study was only carried out in one province of Zimbabwe. It is therefore recommended that a further study that includes all the ten provinces be carried out. This would enable generalisation of results to Zimbabwe as a whole. It also allows the policy makers to implement the findings at national level rather than acting on findings that are not representative of the whole nation.

The study focused only on four main factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. There are other factors that were not investigated as reflected in the model that is proposed from the current study. Other studies can be carried out to establish other factors that may influence high school students in choosing careers.

The issue of field trips, which was found to be less influential to students' choices of careers, requires further investigation as literature has supported their effectiveness. Schools may not be organising these trips properly to the detriment of their students.

5. 10 FINAL COMMENTS

The current study investigated the factors that influence the choices of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. The study focused only on four factors which include family, schools, gender and peers. The choice of the four factors was informed by the literature reviewed.

The findings of the study established that family, schools and peers had a bearing on the students' choices of careers in a variety of ways. However, gender as a factor was found to be less influential as reflected by the majority of the participants who rated gender issues as not having influence on their choices of careers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CAREER GUIDANCE TEACHERS

This questionnaire seeks to assess factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. The study is part of the researcher's Doctor of Education in Psychology Degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and should help career guidance and counselling services provision in schools. You do not need to write your name as no respondent will be traced or identified from this study whatsoever as confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is only interested in your own opinion. All data and information generated from this study will be treated as strictly private and confidential. You are therefore kindly requested to complete the questionnaire as honest as possible. Thank you for participating in this study

Biographical data

Serial Number

Kindly indicate your response to each question by placing a tick ☐ *in an appropriate box*

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Professional qualification

Teacher	
Counsellor	

Section A: Family influence on students' career choices

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Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Parents influence on children affect career guidance at school					
2. Students come to school with predetermined careers					
3. Parental education has an impact on children's choice of careers					
4. Parental actions have an impact on their children's careers					
5. The quality of parental offspring relationship is influential to children's choice of careers					
6. Adolescents who cannot separate effectively from their parents are not free to make independent career decisions					
7. Children choose certain careers to please their parents					
8. Parental values and beliefs influence children on career choice					
9. Parents can create interest of certain careers in their children					
10. Family members can be identified as models by children					
11. Parental connectedness and expectations are influential in children's choice of careers					

12. How best can schools improve career guidance in schools?

    i.   ………………………………………………………………………………
………

    ii.   ………………………………………………………………………………
……

13. Is school guidance and counselling important to students' career choices?

Yes	No	Not sure

Explain your answer:

i. ……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

………

ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

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SECTION B: School influence on students' career choice

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
14. Career guidance in schools is concerned with clearing students' career confusion					
15. Students enjoy career guidance lessons schools provide					
16. Location of the school has a bearing on students choice of careers					
17. Career experts are invited to the school to offer career guidance lessons					
18. Students tour different work places as a career exploration					
19. Career guidance help children acquire knowledge and skills about certain careers					
20. School career guidance widens the children's horizon on careers					
21. Career guidance in schools positively influence career decision making skills					

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22. Quality of teaching positively influence students' career choice					
23. School polices influence career decision making					
24. Mentors in forms of teachers provide students with an introductory aspects of professions					

SECTION C: Gender influence on students' choice of careers

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. Boys and girls have the same motivation towards career guidance					
26. Gender influences students' choice of careers					
27. Male students have higher career ambitions compared to girls					
28. Girls are competing with boys for careers that were used to be dominated by men					
29. Boys use computers earlier than girls					
30. Boys and girls are socially constructed to be different in terms of careers					
31. Women's role is homemaker and men's role is breadwinner					
32. Gender influences career behaviour					
33. Women put higher value on careers that are concerned with caring for others					
34. There are traditionally male subjects and female dominated subjects					
35. Masculine identity and feminine identity have an impact on career choice					

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SECTION D: Peer influence on career pathways

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
36. Peer advice on careers is essential to fellow students					
37. The interaction of students is a powerful tool for children to choose certain careers					
38. Students rely on encouragement from students of their age					
39. Entrepreneurship information is more influential if it comes from peers					
40. Validation of careers is provided by peers					
41. Information given by the peers is always reliable					
42. Peer group pressure influence is sometimes used as pressure to induce young adolescents into predetermined careers					
43. Female students are more likely to be influenced by peers to choose careers					
44. Male students are more likely to be influenced by fellow male students to choose careers					
45. Students in peer groups are likely to choose similar careers					
46. Career behaviour modification comes from peers					
47. Peer groups are more likely to accept career advice from members whom they value most					

Thank you

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire seeks to assess factors that influence the choice of careers among high school students in Zimbabwe. The study is part of the researcher's Doctor of Education in Psychology Degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and should help career guidance and counselling services provision in schools. You do not need to write your name as no respondent will be traced or identified from this study whatsoever as confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is only interested in your own opinion. All data and information generated from this study will be treated as strictly private and confidential. You are therefore kindly requested to complete the questionnaire as honest as possible. Thank you for participating in this study.

Section A: Biographical data

Serial Number

Kindly indicate your response to each question by placing a tick ☐ in an appropriate box

1. Age

15-16	
17-18	
19- above	

2. Gender

Male	
Female	

3. You are doing form

Form 4	
Form 5	
Form 6	

4. Location of the school

Town	
Rural	
Farm	

5. Type of school

Boarding	
Day	

6. Type of scholar

Boarder	
Day scholar	

7. Responsible authority

Government	
Private	
Church	

8. Father's educational level

Primary school level	
Secondary school level	
College level	
University level	

9. Mother's educational level

Primary School level	
Secondary school level	
College level	
University level	

10. Father's employment

General labourer	
Professional	
Self employed	
Never employed	

11. Mother's employment

General labourer	
Professional	
Self employed	
Never employed	

Section A: Family influence on career choice

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
12. I have chosen a career already					

13. I am into

Sciences	
Arts	
Commercials	

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
14. My father influenced me into the career I want to pursue					
15. My mother was influential to the career I want to pursue					
16. The family business is a factor in my choosing a career					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. The dominant profession in my family is also my preferred career					
18. Information I got from my parents helped me to choose a career					
19. My father's career had an impact on my choice of career					
20. My mother's career had an effect on my choice of career					
21. Older siblings had an influence on my career choice					
22. An extended family member was influential in the career that I chose					

23. Who else among family members would have influenced you to take the career you want to pursue ………………………………………….

24. How many of your relatives have been in the profession that you want to pursue?

None	
One	
Two	
More than two	

Section B: School Influence on career choice

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. Career guidance is comprehensively offered at our school					
26. School career days influenced my career choice					
27. Career trips or field trips influenced my career choice					
28. School career guidance cleared career confusion that I had					
29. My class teacher was influential to the career I want to pursue					
30. The career guidance counsellor was influential to the career I want to do					

31. The school head was influential to the career I want to do					
32. The subjects I do influenced my career decision					
33. Former students' careers had a positive influence on my career choice					
34. School career exploration and career decision making activities broaden students' career horizons					
35. My preferred career is linked to my favourite subjects					

36. When did you decide about the career that you want to pursue?

Before primary school	
During primary school	
At high school	

37. What activities do your school embark on that increase career knowledge?

…………………………………………………………………………………….
…………………………………………………………………………………….

Yes	
No	

…………………………………………………………………………………….

38. Does your school screen students at a certain level?

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39. Screening leads students towards certain careers					

Section C: Gender factors influencing career choice

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
40. There are careers suitable for men and others suitable for women					
41. Male students have higher career ambitions than girls					
42. Boys and girls were socialised to choose careers that are gender sensitive					
43. Women's role is homemaker and male's role is breadwinner					
44. Boys can use computers more effectively to solve problems than girls					
45. Male models have influenced me to take the career I want to pursue					
46. Female models have influenced me to choose the career I want to do					
47. I value career advice I get from same sex friends					

Section D: Peer influence on career choice

Item	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
47. Career education comes from other students					
48. Peer influence regarding career choices is powerful					
49. My friends have influenced me to choose a career					
50. Peer advice on career guidance was helpful to me					
51. My friends validated the career that I chose					

52. Information given by friends is always reliable					
54. I chose a career that is similar to my friends					
55. I embrace the advice I get from peers that I value most					
56.My friends give comprehensive and proper advice on careers					

57. Which of your friends were most influential to the career you would like to   pursue?

Classmates	
Friends at school	
Schoolmates	
Home friends	

58. What kind of information about careers do you normally get from peers?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………

59. Generally which of the following was most influential to your choice of career?

Family	
School	
Gender	
Peers	

Thank you

APPENDIX C: CLEARANCE LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION – HEAD OFFICE

5863 Sambarafuta Crescent

Hillside

Masvingo

17 July 2015

The Secretary

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P O Box CY 121

Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION FOR CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE MIDLANDS PROVINCE

I, Jeofrey Mtemeri (National Registration Number 12 025264N 12) am a registered student with the University of South Africa (UNISA) doing a Doctoral study in Educational Psychology degree. My Student Number is 51816822. I wish to carry out a study on **Factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.** The intended participants of the study are high school students in form 4 to 6 and Career guidance teachers in the sampled schools in the Midlands Province. The student participants will be selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The career guidance teachers will be randomly selected. A total of 1200 students and 20 career guidance teachers are earmarked to participate in the study. I therefore request permission to carry out a study in the above mentioned province. The researcher assures you that no anticipated risks are expected to the participants.

The study will surely benefit the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in general and the Midlands Province in particular. The results of the study will benefit career guidance teachers in schools and other stakeholders who have interest in career guidance and counselling. It will enhance the teaching of career guidance in high schools in Zimbabwe.

Participation in the study will be purely voluntary. If the participant intents to drop out he/she will do so freely. If they intent to take their contributions with them they are also free. The data

they contribute will be strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only. Anonymity is also assured to all the participating schools.

Below is a list of schools that will participate in the study. Also attached is a letter from UNISA confirming my registration for the current academic year and research instruments for both students and career guidance teachers.

Yours Faithfully

Jeofrey Mtemeri

Cell Number: 0772849959/ email: mtemerij@gmail.com

APPENDIX D: CLEARENCE LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION – MIDLANDS PROVINCE

5863 Sambarafuta Crescent

Hillside

Masvingo

2 October 2015

The Provincial Education Director

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

P O Box 737

Gweru

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION FOR CLEARENCE TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE MIDLANDS PROVINCE

I, Jeofrey Mtemeri (National Registration Number 12 025264N 12) am a registered student with the University of South Africa (UNISA) doing a Doctoral study in Educational Psychology degree. My Student Number is 51816822. I wish to carry out a study on **Factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.** The intended participants of the study are high school students in form 4 to 6 and Career guidance teachers in the sampled schools. The student participants will be selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The career guidance teachers will be randomly selected. A total of 1200 students and 20 career guidance teachers are earmarked to participate in the study. I therefore request permission to carry out a study in the province. The researcher assures you that no anticipated risks are expected to the participants.

The study will surely benefit the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in general and the Midlands Province in particular. The results of the study will benefit career guidance teachers in schools and other stakeholders who have interest in career guidance and counselling. It will enhance the teaching of career guidance in high schools in Zimbabwe.

Participation in the study will be purely voluntary. If the participant intents to drop out he/she will do so freely. If they intent to take their contributions with them they are also free. The data they contribute will be strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only. Anonymity is also assured to all the participating schools.

Yours Faithfully

Jeofrey Mtemeri

Cell Number 0772849

APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY RESEARCH IN RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS

5863 Sambarafuta Crescent

Hillside

Masvingo

05 October 2015

School Name _____

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I, Jeofrey Mtemeri I, (National Registration Number 12 025264N 12) am a registered student with the University of South Africa (UNISA) doing a Doctoral study in Educational Psychology degree. My Student Number is 51816822. I wish to carry out a study on **Factors that influence the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe.** The intended participants of the study are high school students in form 4 to 6 and Career guidance teachers. The student participants will be selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The career guidance teachers will be randomly selected. A total of 60 students and 1 career guidance teacher are earmarked to participate in the study. I therefore request permission to carry out a study at your school. The researcher assures you that no anticipated risks are expected to the participants.

The study will surely benefit the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in general and your school in particular as the research results will be conveyed to your school for use by career guidance teachers. The findings will enhance the teaching of career guidance in high schools in Zimbabwe.

Participation in the study will be purely voluntary. If the participant intents to drop out he/she will do so freely. If they intent to take their contributions with them they are also free. The data

they contribute will be strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only. Anonymity is also assured to all the participants.
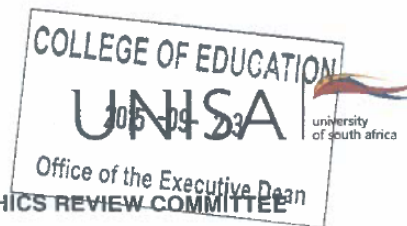
Thank you in advance for your cooperation

Yours Faithfully

Jeofrey Mtemeri

Cell Number 0772849959

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

16 September 2015

Ref # **2015/09/16/51816822/08/MC**
Student#: Mr J Mtemeri
Student Number#:51816822

Dear Mr Mtemeri

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher
Mr J Mtemeri
Tel: +263 77284 9959
mtemerij@gmail.com

Supervisor
Prof. R Chireshe
Department of Special Needs Education
Tel: +263 777 308 244
chireshe@yahoo.co.uk

Proposal: Factors influencing the choice of career pathways among high school students in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe

Qualification: D Ed in Psychology of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for 2 years.

For full approval: The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 16 September 2015.
The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:
1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

> An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.
>
> 3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.
>
> Note:
>
> The reference number **2015/09/15/51816822/08/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof VI McKay
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approval template 2014

APPENDIX G: CLEARANCE LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION – HEAD OFFICE

All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education
Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax:794505

ZIMBABWE

REFERENCE: C/426/3 Midlands
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

18 September 2015

Mr. J. Mtemeri
5863 Sambarafuta Cresent
Hillside
MASVINGO

Re: **APPLICATION FOR CLEARANCE TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY AT THORNHILL, REGINA MUNDI, ANDERSON, MAMBO, MKOBA 3, ASCOT, FLETCHER, GUINEA FOWL HIGH SCHOOLS: GWERU DISTRICTS, TONGOGARA, PAKAME, HANGE AND RUSUNUNGUKO HIGH SCHOOLS: SHURUGWI DISTRICT, KWEKWE, MBIZO AND RUTENDO HIGH SCHOOLS: KWEKWE DISTRUCT, RIO TINTO, CHEZIYA AND NJELELE HIGH SCHOOLS: GOKWE DISTRICT, DADAYA, ZVISHAVANE AND MUSUME HIGH SCHOOLS: MBERENGWA DISTRICT, HAMA, MAPIRAVANA, HOLY CROSS, CHIZHOU HIGH SCHOOLS: CHIRUMANZU DISTRICT**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at **Thornhill, Regina Mundi, Anderson, Mambo, Mkoba 3, Ascot, Fletcher, Guinea Fowl High Schools: Gweru Districts, Tongogara, Pakame, Hange And Rusununguko High Schools: Shurugwi District, Kwekwe, Mbizo And Rutendo High Schools: Kwekwe Distruct, Rio Tinto, Cheziya and Njelele High Schools: Gokwe District, Dadaya, Zvishavane and Musume High Schools: Mberengwa District, Hama, Mapiravana, Holy Cross, Chizhou High Schools: Chirumanzu District:** Midlands Province on the title:

"FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF CAREER PATHWAYS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE MIDLANDS PROVINCE OF ZIMBABWE"

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director, Midlands Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education by 31 March 2016.

E. Chinyowa
Acting Director: Policy Planning, Research and Development
For: **SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**
cc. PED Midlands Province

APPENDIX H: EDITOR'S LETTER

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Barbara Shaw

Editing/proofreading services

18 Balvicar Road, Blairgowrie, 2194

Tel: 011 888 4788 Cell: 072 1233 881

Email: bmshaw@telkomsa.net

Full member of The Professional Editors' Group

</div>

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to inform you that I have done language editing and

formatting on the thesis **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF CAREER**

PATHWAYS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE MIDLANDS

PROVINCE OF ZIMBABWE by JEOFREY MTEMERI

Barbara Shaw

12 February 2017