



Promoting Career Guidance and Counselling of Secondary School Learners: Implication for Policy and Practice

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ABSTRACT The importance of career guidance and counselling in promoting the economic development of any country cannot be underrated. This study endeavoured to assess the efficacy of career and guidance counselling in high schools in promoting labour market requirements. This qualitative study purposively sampled 30 participants; comprising 12 Grade 10-12 learners and 18 Life Orientation teachers in three secondary schools who responded to face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and questaviews. The study found that career guidance and counselling as a component in the life orientation subject was not effectively taught, hence, learners cannot choose the right subjects for specific careers and instead, they relied on their intuition, uninformed parents and peers. The study found that learners were not effectively prepared for the job market. The study recommends training and staff development of teachers in career guidance and counselling to empower them to adequately prepare learners for the world of work.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of pertinently skilled workforce in the development of the economy of a country cannot be undervalued. It means that students coming out of higher learning institutions should possess the required knowledge and skills for the job market. Young people continue to struggle in making the transition from the school learning mode to the labour market. Overflowing institutes of higher learning seem to produce graduates that roam the streets. Education systems today face challenges in offering school experience that affords students with the chance to develop attitudes, knowledge, and skills essential for lifelong careers. Students face the dilemma of choosing a career in which they would use their full potential, delight in it and be valued for their economic contribution.

According to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2009: 12), "Labour market policies, reforms and trends influence the development of individual work roles, accompanied for many by the acquisition of higher or more relevant skills." This stance has exerted pressure on education systems to structure their vocational training to offer relevant and appropriate skills for students to survive in the labour market. But one would ask, how early should

an individual or the system start thinking about the career pathway? It all starts in Early Childhood when children are introduced to different professionals who provide essential services in the community. "When I grow up I would like to be a nurse", says one child while the other shouts: "I would like to be a baker." Learners at this age have no clue of what it takes to achieve dream professions or trades. These dreams and desires to emulate role models somehow change over time, fade away, or die because they are not nurtured or encouraged throughout primary school years to early high school. Towards the completion of high school, education systems realise the need to prepare learners for the labour market or economic sustainability, hence, the introduction of Career Guidance and Counselling.

Choosing a career is an important decision that can be daunting to an unapprised individual. Very few students or families ever sit down to strategise a working career before making a career choice based on aptitude, delight, and viability. That is why Omeje (2002) believed that the need for guidance is more emphatic in the changeover from school to employment. Through the Career Guidance and Counselling programme, students can choose a vocation, adequately prepare for it, and attain a successful career pathway.

What is Career Guidance and Counselling?

Career Guidance is a progressive process through which scholars become conscious of the

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interrelationship amid abilities, school achievement, interests, family, work and lifetime roles related to theoretical and career forecasting. Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) is a subject that plays a substantial role in the success of every student who desires to be proprietary with a good profession. It is a programme integrated within the school learning curriculum that is designed to address the needs of students through a clearly defined career learning outcome. It is essential to maximise learners' potential through effective CGC that leads to wise career choices (Oye et al. 2012). Effective CGC programme should be both prevalent and target-group specific; wide-ranging and rigorous to the advantage of individuals and the economy (OECD 2004; Sultana 2003). The role of CGC is to nurture the person's self-awareness, self-directedness, and life skills to set attainable goals; to continuously acquire knowledge, adding worth to their imminent workplace and exploring proper instruction. Through CGC, students discover their unique potentials, acquire the desired knowledge for building a lifelong profession and are equipped with career decision-making skills to become self-actualised (Oye et al. 2012). However, learners in many previously disadvantaged South African secondary schools are still not exposed to comprehensive CGC which has continued the redundancy quandary.

Dabula and Makura (2013) projected that when learners are well-informed, they make the right choices for their career paths. Similar sentiments were expressed by Shumba et al. (2011) who assert that CGC teachers with in-depth knowledge of the content are more equipped to make critical decisions than less informed teachers. Adequately trained CGC teachers can assist learners to improve academic performance so that they make the right career choices. CGC teachers should provide Career Guidance and Counselling to learners, particularly in secondary schools, as this is the stage when students start to make up their minds for their future and establish their career goals.

Jonck and Swanepoel (2016) indicated that, when subject selection takes place at the end of Grade 9, it is crucial that learners confidently make subject choices based on enough knowledge about the world of work. Therefore, it becomes imperative to guide and assist young people in planning their career paths systematically avoid-

ing wrong career choices and the confusion that comes with such decisions. Successful Career Guidance is noteworthy since learners can match their subject choices with careers they want to pursue. The more an individual succeeds in matching their interest with the job, the more likely they will succeed and be satisfied with their careers because the environment would allow them to demonstrate their talents and abilities (Talib et al. 2010).

Through CGC programmes provided in schools, learners can make appropriate decisions on their future careers. Ombaba et al. (2014) mentioned that the services are intended to encourage the growth of students and assist them in progressing towards the realisation of complete sound adjustment and maximum success as per their potential. Besides, the programme helps them to appreciate, accept themselves and exploit their abilities, talents, and interests to gain skills which will cause them to be useful members of society (DoE 2003; Ombaba et al. 2014).

Developed countries such as Finland and USA have advanced career guidance services in their educational systems (Chireshe 2012). In the USA, school counsellors in the middle and high schools are responsible for providing Guidance and Counselling to scholars in several facets of academic and job related-problems or decisions (Do Thi Bich and Nguyen 2015; Miles 2015). They provide a foundation for obtaining knowledge, attitudes, and competence that will enable the scholars to make a successful turnover into the labour market, as well as securing the right jobs and develop lifetime career progression. Furthermore, scholars are expected to entice a relationship between interests and talents and decide on smart long-term career decisions (Do Thi Bich and Nguyen 2015). School counsellors provide holistic support in academic accomplishment, personal/social growth and career progression, assuring that scholars become prolific, well-adjusted adults for the future (Torunoglu and Genctanirim 2014; Amoah et al. 2015). In Ireland and Algeria, Liston and Geary (2014) confirmed that school guidance counsellors also provide comprehensive support for personal, social, educational and occupational development of the youth.

Do Thi Bich and Nguyen (2015) noted that career counsellors played a significant role in

Malaysian schools by preparing the scholars for a successful changeover to the next level, whether towards further education or employment. According to Amoah et al. (2015), counsellors plan career development intervention activities that support students in making informed decisions, gain access to market-driven job-related proficiencies, retrieve and disperse information through technology (Do Thi Bich and Nguyen 2015). Similarly, school counsellors in Malta focus on personal and developmental issues, and helping students make important educational decisions about careers to pursue (Debono et al. 2007).

In Kenya, the Career Guidance teacher provides three most important guidance services which deal with education, occupational or career and these are the world of labour, personal, social and psychosomatic which caters for family relationship, emotional adjustment and intrapersonal relations (Rukwaro 2015). It is the same teacher who empowers learners on the three services over and above his/her usual teaching load and maintaining the discipline of the student as well. This trend is common in most South African schools where the Life Orientation teacher teaches CGC in addition to other curriculum subjects like Commerce, English and other subjects.

Career Guidance and Counselling is central in the development of any educational institution. Unlike teachers, administrators and programme controllers, school counsellors have a substantial role to play in the development of students' career (Aksoy et al. 2014). They ensure that students realise their potential and personal characteristics that are peculiar to them. Gudyanga et al. (2015) mentioned that one of the roles of school counsellors is to reveal opportunities for the scholars as they shape and mould their character and behaviour to adjust in society fully.

On the implementation of Guidance and Counselling, Gudyanga et al. (2015) found that in Zimbabwe's secondary schools, students who achieved highly in specific subjects like Commerce and Business Studies were identified by psychologists, and guidance and counselling teachers at junior school level. After identification of academic excellence and scholastic capability, the students are referred to specialised institutes or gathered into separate classes for specialisation where they undergo Career Guidance

and Counselling from experts in those fields. Based on the above, one wonders if the type of guidance offered by experts also considers personality and interest, besides the abilities of the learners. For teachers to address this gap, they need to be skilled in identifying and considering the competences of learners without focusing on academic performance only.

Holland's Career Guidance Model

The Holland's Career Guidance Model (1985) was adopted as a guide in this study. Holland's model suggests that career choice is an extension of one's personality into the labour world, in several countries (Kochung and Migunde 2011). Furthermore, Holland viewed Super theory with a slightly different approach whereby he established six modalities and six matching labour environments. These are: (1) the realistic type, are individuals who enjoy working with their hands, machines, and tools, often select careers in the architecture or engineering, construction and farming fields; (2) the investigative type, are individuals who use their intelligence and are analytical, and select career titles such as being a biologist, a pharmacist, a dentist, veterinary doctor or computer programmer; (3) the artistic type, are the individuals who are artistic and like making art forms, products, mythical works, musicals, often selecting careers such as being an artist, a poet, a musical performer, interior designer or an author; (4) the social type are persons who use their aptitudes to interrelate with other people, to educate, inform, train or assist them and often opting for a career such as being a counsellor, a social worker, a teacher, a police officer, a religious leader in a ministry; (5) the enterprising type are individuals who have persuasive, verbal tendencies and are by nature extroverts. They frequently pursue careers in law, in corporate and politics; and finally (6) the conventional type persons who are goal-oriented and often carry social approval and believe in rules, procedures, exercise self-control, have the power, status and usually orderly. They may choose jobs that require mathematical minds such as being a cashier, bank teller or a statistician.

Even though individuals possess parts of each of these personality categories, they have a unique type which is overriding and the other two that may be secondary. Holland (1985) further indicat-

ed that six rudimentary labour environments have similar names. Individual personalities are then harmonised to matching occupation categories. He believed that individuals in the matching occupation have comparable personality qualities. A professional choice is usually not random but is an expression of one's temperament; and that professional success, constancy, and gratification depends on congruence or agreement between one's nature and the job situation (Holland 1985; Sikhwari 2015).

Holland's theory was appropriate for this study as the learners' factors should be well-thought-out to make an informed decision concerning their choice of subject. Consequently, CGC teachers ought to guide learners to understand their diverse personality traits and how to match them with their career choice. Knowledge gained through CGC should enable learners to link careers with suitable labour settings. Holland's (1985) theory is a popular explanatory and predictive model of career behaviour and can be applied meaningfully by CGC teachers as well as other professionals who are not psychologists or counsellors. CGC teachers can also use the Self-Directed Search (SDS) questionnaire and the test, to measure professional interest. The SDS questionnaire is useful in Career Counselling as it can determine a person's occupational interests, especially for high school learners and adults.

Furthermore, the theory outlines career behaviour limitations regarding an individual's attributes, six modalities of career choice and job availability. The challenge comes when the person's personality and job availability do not match. This problem may lead to frustration and unemployment which is experienced in South Africa some learners most likely chose careers that are responsive to labour markets without matching personality traits with career choice. However, the limitations of the theory are that it does not take cognisance of an individuals' socio-economic and cultural factors and only provides a once-off decision about one's career (Booyens 2012). Meaning that, once a person finds a job, they stay in that position for life without diversifying.

Lack of Career Guidance among Students

Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009) noticed that in Nigeria, some students made career choices

based on either trial and error or the guidance from less-informed relatives and acquaintances. Furthermore, the researchers bewailed at the number of graduates that are jobless due to improper CGC in schools which did not prepare them enough to identify the field that best fits well with their aptitudes and interest but made occupational choice based on fate (Mghweno et al. 2013). In a similar vein, Naude (2014) noted that a large number of school-leavers exiting school doors without any form of training are unemployed in established careers where a career development path can unfold. Career counselling in most institutions is piecemeal and, in many cases, non-existent (Reddy and Rauschenberger 2015). Due to lack of career counselling learners often choose a career within the constrictions of environmental and personal influences such as economic need, educational restrictions, gender, and cultural discernment, or lack of family support (Miles and Naidoo 2016).

According to Salleh (2010), current data indicate an increase in the number of at-risk students who usually perform below average, show behavioural problems, lack motivation, are of lower socio-economic background and are uncertain of their career. As a result, Career Guidance teachers find it difficult to prepare them to pursue the right marketable careers. Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) observed that some students' career aspirations of prestigious occupations fade away because of low academic achievement, poor choice of subject combination for the school certificate examination, lack of monetary support to continue with their education and lack of adequate information about various trades. Lack of career guidance counsellors and insufficient interest in vocational guidance makes learners to choose the wrong profession (Aksoy et al. 2013).

Contextual Application of Knowledge Learned

Magano (2011) maintained that one of South Africa's challenges since the introduction of Life Orientation as a compulsory learning area is the application of what was taught to real life situations to ensure that pedagogy occurred. The four domains covered in Life Orientation (LO) are physical development, social development, career development, and well-being. CGC is offered by the LO teachers to impart knowledge, skills, and mor-

als to learners and assist learners regarding career choice. However, the challenge is that most students are provided with inadequate information about occupations and careers on which to base their interest (Amoah et al. 2015). From the context of the study, one may contend that LO teachers are not giving CGC full attention in our communities, yet it directs the path and prospects of our youth.

Lack of Proper Career Counselling Facilities

Counselling facilities are essential for effective execution of Career Guidance and Counselling. Unfortunately, most schools do not have proper counselling facilities and consequently, learners turn to their peers or other media for support and guidance (Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari 2013). Echoing similar sentiments Wambu and Wickman (2011), Sevinc et al. (2012) and Samanyanga and Ncube (2015), concurred that poor or lack of appropriate counselling facilities, such as counselling rooms and books hinders effective counselling. Life Orientation teachers need strong support from the Education Department for them to effectively guide learners with life skills, moulding and shaping their personalities and capacitating them to choose the appropriate careers.

Although the Kenyan Government has seen the importance of CGC, the lack of facilities has led to schools providing guidance and counselling service to learners in open spaces or under the trees in full view of people passing (Mushaandja et al. 2013; Nyarangi 2011). Mbongo et al. (2016) also revealed that in Namibia, very few schools have rooms specifically allocated for guidance and counselling. The situation is the same in Zimbabwe, where the shortage of counselling facilities affected the implementation of Guidance and Counselling (Farisayi 2008). In a similar vein, Mahlangu (2011) noted that school districts in South Africa had challenges of limited resources for career counselling services, lack of expertise and knowledge from senior management of schools and district co-ordinators. Given the above, one may conclude that the lack of facilities and inadequate counselling in schools contributes to the high unemployment rate in most countries.

Insufficient Resources

Schools in South Africa face the challenges of lack of financial resources, poor guidance and counselling knowledge, lack of information technology, and a shortage of staff (Mahlangu 2011; Khan et al. 2012). Concurring, Mushaandja et al. (2013) established that resources for CGC should address the learners' academic, social, personal, career/vocational concerns facilitating their holistic development. Gudyanga et al. (2015) found that CGC teachers in Chinhoyi urban secondary schools in Zimbabwe faced numerous challenges such as inadequate resources and facilities, and limited time allocation as teachers gave priority to examinable subjects. That is why Gudyanga et al. (2015) suggested that effective implementation of CGC can only take place when the responsible personnel are proficient in the area; otherwise, it is a waste of resources and time.

In Kenya, girls experience challenges in accessing career information such as lack of career guidance teachers, lack of career activities, shortage of books and advertising material on different careers options. Teachers responsible for CGC also listed the challenges they encounter in providing career information as lack of the latest news, insufficient time because of the teachers' heavy workload and scholars' tight programme on teaching and learning at schools, inadequate funds to offer career guidance, lack of interest and negative attitudes by both teachers and learners (Rukwaro 2015; Gudyanga et al. 2015).

Shortage of Staff

Studies have revealed lack of CGC teachers as one of the challenges found in most Turkish schools resulting in high teachers to student ratios and some schools using Heads of Departments (HoDs) to provide CGC (Mushaandja et al. 2013; Sevinc et al. 2012; Maiyo and Owiye 2009). Oye et al. (2012) also found inadequacy of Career Guidance and Counsellors in Nigerian secondary schools. Ombaba et al. (2014) stated that scholars hardly receive adequate CGC services on time in Kenya. Debono et al. (2007) argued that schools tend to marginalise CGC due to the persistent nature of the individual and behavioural problems of scholars, yet they need to consider educational and vocational choices. The scarcity of

Career Guidance and Counselling teachers in these schools leaves some students with issues that affect their academic performance, including Career decision-making skills. One of the challenges facing South Africa is that, not all communities and schools have suitable Career Guidance and Counselling services (Prinsloo 2007) because Miles (2015) found that wealthy schools often engage the services of psychologists while schools from low socio-economic backgrounds are poorly resourced in terms of Career centres and qualified LO teachers to provide CGC. Therefore, learners are left with no option but to navigate and explore Careers based on survival.

Misconception about Guidance and Counselling

The general belief people have in Algeria is that talking to a counsellor is usually a form of weakness and psychological instability (Abdelatif 2011). In Ethiopia, culturally, females are not allowed to approach males privately and confidentially, hence, girls avoid school guidance and counselling services provisions administered by male school counsellors (Alemu 2013). Likewise, the high crime rate against women and children in South Africa has tarnished the image of men even those in critical services such as CGC. Therefore, the personal/social, academic and career/vocational concerns of the girl-child are left unattended, thereby limiting their holistic development and consequently, their optimum functionality.

Lack of Support from Different Stakeholders

In countries like Kenya and Nigeria, some principals in secondary schools, school board members, teachers, parents, students and the community had a false impression that a school can function effectively and profitably without a Career Guidance counsellor (Oye et al. 2012; Wambu and Wickman 2011; Wambu and Fisher 2015). School counsellors have no access to necessary support from administrators and teachers, hence, school timetables do not make provisions for CGC activities (Mushaandja et al. 2013; Daniels 2013). Furthermore, school principals still believe that teaching is the priority business of any teacher, and counselling takes place when classes are not active, for example, during tea/lunch breaks, and after school (Nyarangi 2011; Nkala 2014). On the

contrary, research carried out in Ireland on the teachers' perspectives on teacher counsellors exposed that teachers viewed guidance counsellors positively (Mandera 2013). Principals and school administrators do not understand the scope of counselling teachers' responsibilities and the importance of Career Guidance and, in some case, even perceive it as a disruption to the academic learning process (Salleh 2010; Reddy and Rauschenberger 2015). Heads of schools do not acknowledge the importance of CGC; as a result, stakeholders are not likely to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programme, thereby potentially compromising the quality and quantity of service provisions received by learners (Nkala 2014; Majoko 2013). Consequently, parents or families of a poor socio-economic status experience challenges with career choices for their children due to lack of knowledge, career awareness, and learners fail to get jobs that match their personality owing to lack of proper CGC (Talib et al. 2010). Until such time those different stakeholders understand the importance of CGC in schools, afford the necessary backing to teachers responsible for providing the service, learners will continue to experience career confusion and uncertainties.

METHODOLOGY

This paper was primarily informed by the interpretivism and the qualitative methodological approach which share some commonalities in the context of this study. This methodology facilitated the invasion of learners' learning in their space allowing for the extraction of silent and hidden information. It enabled the researchers to understand and appreciate the learners' views concerning CGC as taught by LO teachers and at the same time gathered first-hand information from teachers about their experience in offering CGC in their schools (De Vos et al. 2013).

Through the case study in-depth investigation from multiple viewpoints of the complexity and distinctiveness of each case in real life helped the researchers to understand how partakers relate and interact with each other in a specific status quo, and how they interpret the meaning of a phenomenon under study (Starman 2013; Maree 2007). Participants responded to focus group discussions, semi-structured one-on-one interviews,

and questaviews. Learners shared how Life Orientation teachers assisted them in making career choices while LO teachers gave details on their experiences teaching CGC.

Data were analysed through a systematic process of coding, categorising, and interpretation providing explanations on CGC by LO teachers and learners in Vhembe District schools (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). Triangulation was also applied to give a better understanding of a problem, situation or issue under study (Kumar 2014). Six Life Orientation teachers responded to the face-to-face interview; six participated in a focus group discussion while the other six responded on the questaviews. Twelve learners from Grade 10 – 12 participated in the focus group interviews. A total of 30 participants were coded as follows:

LOT 1-6	Face-to-face Interview – Life Orientation teachers
FGL 7-12	Focus Group Discussion – Life Orientation teachers
QLOT 13-18	Questaviews – Life Orientation teachers
FGL 19-30	Focus Group Discussion – Learners

Ethical Considerations

The study complied with the code of ethics proposed by the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee which then issued an ethical clearance written permission before the commencement of the study. Also, the researchers sought permission to research in the district from the Department of Basic Education in Limpopo Province. The study adhered to ethical issues which included authorisation to conduct the study, informed consent, and voluntary participation, protection from harm, confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity.

RESULTS

Career Guidance and Counselling Lessons

Although it is vital for LO teachers to provide adequate CGC to their learners, responses indicate that LO teachers were not as helpful as they were supposed to be in the selection of subjects and giving them proper guidance on careers to

pursue. For instance, FGL19 said: *Career Guidance and Counselling is not taught at school. Instead, teachers prepare to take us to the playgrounds. When we are tired, we are told to either go home or do our homework.* FGL 22 added: *Most educators like Physical Education and Training (PET) as opposed to topics that covered Career Guidance and career choices hence, they make us continue with PET or give us free playtime.* Confirming this allegation, FGL 25 added: *Some teachers are reluctant to go to class during LO periods, and this forces us to keep ourselves busy doing homework or studying other subjects.* Similar sentiments were expressed by QLOT 16: *Some of my colleagues say LO periods are useless, they can stay in the staffroom without being forced to go to the class or be made accountable.* QLOT 17 also added: *After the distribution of subjects to teachers by management, one might find that LO is left unallocated and what normally happens is that someone with a few periods is given the subject, this shows how lowly valued the subject is at this school.*

The general comment from all interviewees was that LO was used as “pass one, pass all” subject where circuit managers ordered that no learner should fail it. This system makes both teachers and learners to undermine the subject, encouraging cheating at the school where learners get marks they do not deserve. QLOT 15 lamented that: *Even if learners failed to do some tasks, they were given marks so that they pass as well.*

The findings appear to indicate that CGC was not effectively taught in most schools making it difficult for learners to choose careers in line with their orientations, hence, they settled for careers that were of little benefit to them or proved to be unmarketable. The findings are in line with Mushaandja et al.’s (2013) argument that CGC is an extra duty that is considered as extra-curricular activities like sport and recreation activities, remedial work, as well as faith-based activities. Similarly, Nweze and Okolie (2014) expressed the same view that guidance and counselling packages in the Nigerian education system were not given the deserved attention that is why most students continue to experience career confusion and uncertainties in tertiary institutions.

III-Advice on Subject Combination

The issue of influencing learners to choose certain subjects was a major concern to some of the LO teachers. For example, LOT 6, spoke strongly against teachers influencing learners' choice of subjects: *I find it discouraging to see learners being advised to choose certain subjects, at the same time told that others are not important. If the learners are told that other subjects are not necessary, it becomes difficult for them to decide what to do in the event of incongruent career choice and subject combinations.*

On ill-advising learners FGT12 reiterated: *... Such comments confuse learners, particularly those who would be interested in doing that particular subject deemed to be less important.*

QLOT 14 added that: *The most challenging and perplexing feeling is to come across a learner who is not yet sure of what career path to pursue in Grade 12 and after. Some learners are still uncertain of the degree they would pursue in tertiary education.*

Concurring QLOT 16 commented: *One time a teacher was found forcing some learners to do Maths Literacy within the stream of Commerce, this is not fair to the students especially when they are not good in Maths.* Learners in the focus group discussion expressed similar concerns on the advice teachers gave them on the subject combination leading to career choices.

While some learners were not aware of the ripple effect of wrong subject combination, FGL 27 lamented: *I wanted to study Soil Science, but I was told to do Maths and Agriculture. When I reached Grade 12, I discovered that I had been made to choose the wrong subject combinations. I realized then that I should have done Physical Science as well, and it was too late for me to do anything about it. As it is, I have no option but to change my career plans.*

While teachers are mostly to blame for learners' poor subject combinations, and in the long run wrong career choices, parents are equally at fault for failing to lay a proper career foundation for their children. Teachers allege that parents tend to impose careers on their children without considering their talent and ability. For instance, FGT 12 pointed out: *Some parents insist that their children be allowed to do Maths and Sciences,*

while we as teachers can see that the learner is not good in those subjects.

It also emerged from the interviewees that learners who were not well informed about their future career made the wrong choices for their tertiary studies. That is why many students spend many years jumping from one course to the other because they lack a concrete foundation on career choice. Maree and van der Westhuizen (2011) alluded to that CGC was still a challenge in most schools, hence, students have no clear vision of their future career path.

Career Exhibitions

To assist learners in making career choices, LO teachers take them to career exhibitions. Career exhibitions are platforms where learners interact face-to-face with captains or representatives of industry. Through one-on-one or group interactions, learners are exposed to the world of work and can ask questions related to careers represented by those individuals. Teachers rely on these career exhibitions to assist learners in choosing careers.

QLO T16 advanced: *When we have career exhibitions, I encourage learners to go there in large numbers so that they ask questions to different career exhibitors about careers of their choice. These exhibitions help them get information from the horse's mouth, instead of relying on what we teach them in class. This is advantageous to them as they become well informed on several careers they may wish to pursue as they enrol at institutions of higher learning.*

Learners in the focus group discussion confirmed that career exhibitions were more educative than class lessons from LO teachers. For instance, FGL 20 explained: *Going for a career exhibition taught me a lot about choosing a career... that I must like it and enjoy doing it.*

FGL 25 added that: *Career exhibitions are significant and informative, but we often go there after we have made blunders in subject combinations, and sometimes some of us fail to raise transport money to attend these places.*

The importance of personality in choosing a career was also emphasised by QLOT 17: *I encourage learners to choose careers that are in line with their personalities, and this involves*

knowing who they are, what they can do. For example, I always tell them to keep in mind that the career they choose should suit their interests and abilities. Universities often hold career days where students can access information on courses offered besides sending brochures to high schools.

Because of this, QLO T13 added: *Nowadays learners have smartphones, so I encourage them to use them to research careers that are responsive to the labour market. I also encourage them to check newspapers like Work Place, Sunday Times, or Mail and Guardian or use the public library for additional information on careers and career choices.*

Similarly, FGL 30 emphasized that: *Through these educational trips we visit different companies where we get exposure and experience first-hand what happens in the real world of work.*

However, LOT 17 lamented: *At times parents are not supportive when we send learners for career exhibitions because they do not pay for transport; hence, some learners miss out. When it comes to traveling, some parents may not pay because of poverty which is high in the area.*

Data revealed that career exhibitions as part of CGC are educative and essential although the timing of them is sometimes too late for the choice of subject combination. It also came out that not all learners utilise the opportunity, due to lack of funds they fail to visit targeted places.

High Teacher Turnover

A concern was raised on the constant changing of teachers as a bad trend that negatively impacted on the academic performance of learners on LO as a subject and particularly on CGC. All interviewees concurred on the willy-nilly changing of teachers who teach LO.

For instance, QLOT 13 pointed out that: *A common problem in most schools is that every year, educators change. Sometimes learners can have more than two teachers coming to teach the same subject in one class. In my school, for example, most people who teach Life Orientation are those who teach Commerce because they mostly have less workload.*

QLOT14 said: *I have now developed a negative attitude towards the subject because the management of school keeps changing us and I*

am not sure whether I will spend a year teaching the subject.

Collaboratively, LOT 1 said that: *I am worried because most educators who teach LO are not the ones who were trained, but those that the principal feels are not good at certain subjects.*

Learners in the focus group discussion also expressed grave concern on the teacher turnover with comments such as: *Sometimes two teachers rotate in teaching this subject (FGL 19). The last teacher we had was excellent, I was beginning to like the subject she but went away before the end of the year (FGL 21). We never saw Ms. Gatsheni in class for weeks, but she sent work for us to do on our own. (FGL30)*

This confusion was summed up by the teachers' focus group discussants who observed that: *Once you start teaching the subject, you develop an interest in it. Then you acquire skills as time goes on and, alas, the following year you are moved to another subject, and a new teacher comes in to take over. There is no consistency when it comes to teaching Life Orientation in our schools (FGT10).*

Data revealed that generally, schools do not value the importance of LO as a subject that holds the future for learners. The high teacher turn-over in the teaching of the subject underpins the lack of seriousness in schools regarding CGC. One would assume that the Department of Basic Education is not concerned about the importance of Career Guidance and Counselling to learners. Corroborating this finding is the study by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) where teachers reported of a lack of administrative support had the strongest association with teacher turnover.

Lack of CGC Skills

The lack of prerequisite skills and knowledge makes teachers believe that hard work is necessary for learners to achieve their dreams. For instance, FGL 22 mentioned that teachers always encourage them to work very hard in the subjects they have chosen so that they can achieve their goals. This suggestion shows that teachers lack promotional skills to enhance learners' understanding of CGC; hence learners fail to decide on the proper career paths. Learners' focus group discussants complained: *We do not see any role*

they play as far as career issues are concerned because a teacher comes into class and sits in there for the whole period doing nothing, while seemingly bored. Sometimes, these teachers act like we are the ones who introduced Life Orientation as a subject in the school curriculum (FGL29).

Teachers do not teach Career Guidance and Counselling at this school. Instead, teachers prepare to take us to the play-grounds. When we are tired, we are told to either go home or do our homework (FGL 27).

Learners' focus group discussants admitted that for one to make a proper career choice, there is a need to look at the job market offers. FGD L1 said the following: *We think it is essential to conduct adequate research on the career one should develop. For example, if one wants to become a pilot, one must check the steps and processes required for him/her to become a pilot. It means that one must make a thorough research on certain jobs to align his/her subject combination accordingly.*

Distressful sentiments were also raised by LOT6 who complained: *I do not have the capacity to provide career guidance to learners as I am not trained at all. The Department of Basic Education and the school management do not care about what Life Orientation teachers go through as they try to provide career guidance to learners. That is why Life Orientation is a subject that anybody can teach.*

The issue of learners researching before making career choices is vital if they are to avoid making wrong career choices. Learners need to understand what exists in the world of work so that they examine the different career options available to them and decide their relevance to their characteristics.

Lack of Resources

The availability of resources such as resource centres, career guides, information technology, and counselling rooms is vital for proper Career Guidance and Counselling in schools. FGT9 admitted that: *Teaching the subject without resources is like expecting an untrained and unarmed soldier to do better in the battlefield where his opponents use AK 47 rifles. How is this soldier*

expected to deliver the country from invaders? This is what we are expected to do under the circumstances.

FGL 23 discussants concurred: *The situation in our school is bad. Some of us here are in Grade 11 have spent five months without a Life Orientation teacher. Another learner is teaching the subject.*

LOT 5 and QLOT 13 also said: *The subject was allocated to us because those who were teaching it left since the Department of Basic Education did not renew their contracts.*

DISCUSSION

The study also found that there were several challenges faced by Life Orientation teachers in promoting Career Guidance and Counselling in schools. Some of these challenges were: lack of support by different stakeholders, the negative attitude towards the subject by both learners and teachers, the shortage of Life Orientation teachers, the subject not being valued like other subjects, poor involvement by parents, constant rotation of Life Orientation teachers, and the lack of training and workshops relevant to assist learners on Career Guidance and Counselling. Concurring with findings in this study was the Angelista (2018) who found that teachers had little knowledge on CGC because that facet was missing in their initial training.

The issue of capacity development in the promotion of Career Guidance among learners was found to be very important but lacking as well. In a similar study, Mushi and Lasway (2017) found that the university students failed to meet their expected goals because they lacked proper CGC making them fail to accomplish their expectations in their study. Issues that listed as contributing to this were, among other things, inadequate skills and knowledge, insufficient training and workshops and lack of experts to assist in the continued professional development of Life Orientation teachers (Msiska and Salik 2016). This affected, not only Life Orientation teachers without training but also all Life Orientation teachers. It emerged from the study that the training offered to Life Orientation teachers did not equip them with the necessary skills to promote Career Guidance and Counselling in school. School guidance was not taken seriously by stakeholders in

South African schools and the reason for lack of recognition of its importance was due to teachers lacking training in the subject (Prinsloo 2007; Magano 2011). The study also found that learners were not adequately equipped regarding knowledge and skills to choose the right subjects for specific careers and, instead; some of them relied on their intuition while others relied on their peers and parents. The students' cry in this research resemble the finding by Angelista (2018) where the students lamented that their future expectations were distorted by their teachers and inadequate information they obtained during their earlier level.

CONCLUSION

The study set out investigate the promotion of Career Guidance and Counselling offered in high schools. Career Guidance and Counselling is an indispensable component in the learning as it shapes the future of learners in the world of work. The study reviewed literature unpacking what career guidance was and issues that affected the teaching of the subject in sampled high school. Hollard's Career Guidance Model was used as it explained the importance of well thought out factors for learners to make informed decisions in choosing subject combinations that match the desired career path. Through the qualitative in-depth case study teachers' and learners' experiences in the Career Guidance and Counselling as a subject meant to shape learners' future were exposed. The study concluded that Career Guidance and Counselling was not effectively taught in high schools due to insufficiently trained teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There were several suggestions and recommendations made by Life Orientation teachers and learners concerning the promotion of Career Guidance and Counselling in schools. Some of these were: that competent staff be appointed to handle Career Guidance and Counselling in schools; that there be capacity development of different stakeholders in the importance of Career Guidance and Counselling in schools; there is need District officials in charge of subjects to place value on the subject for it to benefit learners;

stakeholders need to augment their support to school personnel offering CGC to learners; the provision of resources is essential; parental involvement is paramount; cultivating a positive attitude towards the subject, and the collaboration of different stakeholders. The promotion of Career Guidance and Counselling by Life Orientation teachers is only possible if all role players commit themselves and carry out their mandate as expected of them.

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