Title of proposal: The Role of Life Orientation Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng, South Africa

Relationship theme

Career construction, career guidance or career development is one of the vehicles for the emancipation of youth and communities (Hooley, 2015). In line with this notion my research topic seeks to better empower South African Life Orientation teachers who are faced with many challenges including not being employed permanently.

Author: Ms Bomkazi Magadlela

magadb@unisa.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Worldwide governments prioritise career development for youth so that they value life and be able to put food on the table when they have their own families. Youth in this study refers to all the learners who are 14-15 years old and in grade 9. My presentation is drawn from my Doctoral proposal, I shall argue that South African education system does not promote an environment in which capabilities for career construction are sufficiently developed.

The research method for this study is qualitative and is underpinned by focused ethnography. Focused ethnography is preferred because it enables the researcher to explore a distinct problem in a specific context (Wall, 2015). Additionally, through focused ethnography various aspects of culture such as beliefs, values and experiences are discovered (Knoblauch, 2005). Among the research questions, I will enquire are the experiences and how Life Orientation teachers engage youth in career construction. Two frameworks will be used, the career construction theory and Systems Theory Framework. Ethical clearance has been obtained recently and data will be collected at the end of July 2019.

Keywords: Career construction, LO, youth
PROBLEM

Career guidance or career construction is infused in a subject called Life Orientation and it is still on an embryonic stage (South African (SA) Government Gazette 2016; Department of Education, 2011).

Regarding the problem, the South African education system does not have the capacity to properly guide youth to make informed subject choices that lay solid foundations upon which further training can be built to prepare them for meaningful careers when they enter the world of work.

A review conducted by Walters, Watts, and Fleder (2009) on career construction in South Africa identified voids in career development provision like the “lack of coordination; no policies or models for systemic delivery of career guidance.” (p 564-565). According to the Government Gazette (2016) many teachers who are tasked with teaching LO are not trained to teach the subject, nor sufficiently grounded in career construction best practices (Hay, 2018; Kay & Fretwell, 2003). Those teachers that may be identified and get training, the next year are reassigned to other teaching roles and another teacher may teach LO (Government Gazette, 2016). Furthermore, there is a lack of booklets guides, resources and career videos (DHET, 2014). Whilst this is the case, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) syllabus allocates 3 hours to the teaching of careers and subject choices in Grade 9 youth (DoE, 2011).

Against this backdrop, the majority of schools do not have permanent teacher positions for career guidance or career construction. In the district that I will collect data from there is one career advisor is responsible for about 33 secondary schools.

Feedback requested.

The approach of career construction or career guidance as stated above seems not to prepare youth for the next transition, either continuing with tertiary education or being prepared for the world of work. This is a PhD study, I would appreciate it, if I could please be assisted with a career guidance model or approaches that have worked elsewhere. Any other comments, relevant criticism along with suggestions to improve this study is appreciated.