



**TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ORAL SELECTION  
PROCEDURE FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO THE FASHION  
PROGRAMME AT THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF  
TECHNOLOGY**

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of  
Technology: Language Practice in the faculty of Arts and Design at the  
Durban University of Technology.

**Vasantha Reddy**

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Promoter: Professor P Singh (PhD)

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by

Vasanth Reddy

This work is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Technology Degree: Language Practice in the Department of Media, Language and Communication, Faculty of Art and Design, Durban University of Technology.

With the signature below, I Vasanth Reddy, hereby declare that the work that I present in this dissertation is based on my own research, and that I have not submitted this dissertation to any other institution of higher education to obtain an academic qualification.

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V.Reddy

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Date

Approved for final submission.

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Promoter: Professor P Singh

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Date

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## **ABSTRACT**

The selection criteria common to all Fashion schools/departments/programmes both in South Africa and internationally, is the requirement for the applicants to pass an interview. Research confirms that in institutions where student selection includes an interview, the dropout rate is low. The need for this study arose because of the lack of structure of the current oral protocol or interview selection procedure in Fashion at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), and the need to include a larger number of previously disadvantaged applicants into the Fashion programme. The aim of this study therefore was to investigate the career life histories of the Fashion degree students at the DUT to identify a set of biographical variables that can be used for student selection.

Underpinned by the Systems Theory Framework, this study adapted Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure to investigate pre-entry attributes and interactions within family backgrounds, skills and abilities, and prior schooling that impact the goals and commitments of students. Narrative enquiry using semi-structured in-depth interviews provided data which were processed using the three-dimensional narrative analysis approach.

Findings of this study indicate the importance of pre-entry attributes and personality type that is best suited to a career in fashion, and emphasised that intrinsic interests and talents are of primary importance. The results have important implications for student interview selection as it identifies suitable and prepared applicants who will complete and graduate in the minimum time, thereby potentially increasing throughput and output rates in Fashion. Based on the results, the researcher proposed a framework for a standardised and structured interview selection procedure in Fashion at the DUT which enables access to candidates who have the potential for a career in Fashion regardless of their socio-economic or cultural background.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY**

<b>DUT</b>	<b>Durban University of Technology</b>
<b>STF</b>	<b>Systems Theory Framework</b>

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Higher education institutions in South Africa had to deal with an increase of students numbers from 473000 in 1993 to 893 024 in 2010 (UNESCO Report, 2000). This increase was due to the South African Council of Higher Education (NCHE, 1997) calling on tertiary institutions to increase access to previously disadvantaged communities. As a result, the majority of the applicants at public higher education institutions are from socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds; are first generation students, and are at high risk of dropping out, thereby frustrating efforts to address equity (Kuh, Hu and Vesper (2000: 231) and Bitzer (2005: 178).

Giannakopoulos and Buckley (2009: 329), and Brown and Glasner (1999), caution that selecting students who are under-prepared and unprepared for higher education only adds to their disadvantage. Du Plessis (2006); Huysamen (2000: 148); and Jansen (2004:294) concur that the low minimum matriculation grade point average and the fact that many applicants have little or no knowledge, talent, skills, aspirations or the necessary attitudes and values for the programmes for which they have applied, only serve to further disadvantage them.

Scott (2007: 43) and Dawes, Yeld and Smith (1999: 55) adds that the profile of students wanting to enter higher education institutions creates challenges that includes among others, accountability and quality assurance which are directly linked to the amount of public funds that individual institutions receive. These public funds are performance-based which means that the funding formula rewards individual higher education institutions for the number of students who complete a programme in the minimum time

allocated for a programme of study, in other words, the 'throughput', and for the 'output' or the number or cohort who graduate (Department of Education, 2004).

The higher education funding formula requires an increase in 'throughput' and 'output' by focussing on 'quality and excellence' while providing for equal opportunity (National Plan for Higher Education, 2001a). To this end, individual institutions have had to set their own objectives and policies regarding student learning, educational programmes and institutional productivity to maximise the public funds that they receive (Essack, Barnes, Jackson, Majozi, McInerny, Mtshali, Naidoo, Oosthuizen and Suleman, 2009:275). They have also had to revise inadequate programme specific entrance examinations which Koch and Foxcroft (2003:192) believe, is the primary reason for poor performance in higher education. Harman (2000: 118) agrees that if the student selection procedure being used does not have the ability to make reliable judgements on applicants' potential for the said programme, output will be low. In this regard, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) has also revised admission or selection procedures in all programmes.

As the researcher has been lecturing in Fashion for the past 30 years and she is concerned about the low throughput and output in the programme (indicated in Table 1.1,) the section that follows, discusses the selection procedures in Fashion at higher education institutions internationally, in South Africa (SA) and at the DUT.

Table 1.1 indicates that the throughput and output statistics for first-time equivalent (FTE) students were below 60% in 2007 and below 45% in 2006, 2008 and 2009.



Table 1.1: Throughput and output figures for the Department of Fashion, DUT, 2006-2009

Year of intake	FTE student intake	Year of graduation	Diploma output numbers	Throughput %
2006	58	2009	25	43
2007	30	2010	24	55
2008	44	2011	18	41
2009	56	2012	16	29

Source: Department of Management Information Systems, DUT (2012)

## 1.1 STUDENT SELECTION PROCEDURES AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR FASHION

### 1.1.1 International practices

Table 1.2 shows the selection procedures and criteria for undergraduate Fashion students at international institutions and also shows the selection criteria that these institutions have in common.

Table 1.2: Selection procedure and criteria for undergraduate Fashion students in International Institutions

Institution	Grade 12 point average	2nd National Test	University Entrance tests	Portfolio of work	Essay	Personal interview
Tasmania Polytechnic , Tasmania	√	√	√	√	√	√
University of Manchester, UK.	√		√	√	√	√
University of Central California, USA.	√		√	√		√
Ryerson University, Canada 70%-	√	√	√	√	√	√

80%						
TAFE- New South Wales, Australia	√	√	√	√	√	√
Raffles School of Fashion Design, Singapore	√					√
National Institute of Fashion Technology, India	√		√			√
Hong Kong Polytechnic Institute, Hong Kong	√		√			√

Sources: Tasmania Polytechnic homepage (2012); University of Manchester homepage (2012); University of California homepage (2012); Tertiary and Further Education (2012); Raffles homepage (2012); National Institute of Fashion Technology (2012); and Hong Kong Polytechnic Institute homepage (2012).

Countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Canada and the United States of America (USA) accept online applications and adopt similar admission criteria and procedures. Applications to institutions in Singapore, Hong Kong, India and Pakistan are made in person, and are accepted based on their school leaving grade point average, a portfolio of evidence and an interview for short listed applicants (Harman, 2000: 111).

First world countries such as the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA follow the procedure whereby applications for admission are reviewed by lecturers who make up the selection panel and who decide on whether the application warrants an interview. Selection at this stage is based on academic qualifications, references from high schools and the applicants' personal statements or a motivational essay (Yorke, 2002). Applicants are required to: complete a programme specific entrance test that comprises sub-tests of drawing ability; present a portfolio of artwork that they have accumulated over the years; and undergo an interview. The interviews are also meant to establish the applicants' preparedness for a career in Fashion. Portfolios are expected to show an applicant's skills and knowledge of fashion in visual representations of interests, exploration, experimentation and development.

Examples of drawing, colour studies, fabric investigation, two and three dimensional design development and garment and pattern construction may be required by some institutions (London School of Fashion homepage, 2012). Applicants may also be required to present their portfolios and ideas orally. After the selection interviews, a final selection decision is made by a selection panel.

### 1.1.2 Practice in South Africa

Fashion departments in SA higher education institutions adopt similar admission criteria and procedures as the UK, Australia, Canada, and the USA as indicated in Table 1.3.

Table 1. 3: FTE requirements and selection procedures for Fashion in South Africa

Institution	Grade 12 results	Entrance test	Portfolio	Interview
Central University of Technology (CUT)	√	√	√	√
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)	√	√	√	√
Durban University of Technology (DUT)	√	√	√	√
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)	√	√	√	√
University of Johannesburg (UJ)	√	√	√	√
Vaal University of Technology (VUT)	√	√	√	√
Walter Sisulu University (WSU)	√	√		√

Sources: CPUT homepage (2012); CUT homepage (2012); DUT Handbook (2012); NMMU homepage (2012); UJ homepage (2012); VUT homepage (2012); and WSU homepage (2012).

In South African higher education institutions, applications are reviewed by lecturers who make up the selection panels, and selection is based on academic qualifications (Yorke, 2002). In addition, applicants are required to complete a programme specific entrance test that comprises sub-tests of drawing ability, and to present a portfolio of artwork at an interview. These interviews are also meant to establish the degree of academic preparedness of the applicant by assessing the knowledge, skills and attitude of an applicant (CPUT Homepage, 2012; UJ Homepage, 2012; WSU Homepage, 2012; TUT Homepage, 2012). Portfolios are meant to show an applicant's skills and knowledge of fashion. In the case of the DUT, an additional pattern making test is conducted.

### **1.1.3 Practice at the DUT**

The Department of Fashion at the DUT conducts entrance tests for applicants after it has been established that the candidate has met the minimum academic entry requirements. The applicant is then required to complete a Fashion programme specific test to establish if the candidate will meet the minimum programme specific entry requirements.

The entrance test and allocation of points are as follows:

TYPE OF TEST	POINTS
General knowledge	15
Writing skills	10
numeracy test	10

matching the shapes and symbols test	10
technical drawing	5
figure drawing	10
pattern making	10
Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comprehension (5)</li> <li>- articulation (5)</li> <li>- fashion awareness (5)</li> <li>- portfolio presentation (5)</li> <li>- potential (10)</li> </ul>	30

The interview is allocated 30 points, in other words, it constitutes 30% of the entire battery of tests for entry into the Fashion programme at the DUT (DUT Handbook, 2012).

## 1.2 DEMARCATION OF THE PROBLEM

The selection criteria common to all Fashion schools/departments/programmes both in South Africa and internationally, is the requirement for the applicants to pass an interview. According to The Admissions to Higher Education Review Group (2003: 2), (Dixon, Wang, Clavin, Dineen and Tomlinson, 2002: 386) in institutions where student selection included an interview, the dropout rate was low.

Given that the Fashion programme at DUT uses an interview as an integral part of their selection procedure, the low throughput and output rates are not

in keeping with local and international experience in this regard. It was therefore necessary to interrogate the interview in Fashion at the DUT to determine whether this procedure was in fact the problem, and if so, how it could be rectified. Akoojee and Nkomo (2007: 385) agree that selection criteria should be a means of lowering the high dropout rate while providing for the politically motivated rationale to provide equal opportunity.

Many initiatives have been undertaken internationally and in South Africa to improve throughput and output rates and to provide access to socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged applicants. These initiatives include the use of a bridging courses (Tokwe and Schafer, 2009); the teaching of language skills to English Second Language learners (Uys, Van der Walt, Van den Berg and Botha, 2007) and (De Kadt and Mathonsi, 2003: 95); the introduction of a learning support educator in the classroom (Kruger and Yorke, 2010: 295); and examination of student selection procedures to remedy poor performance, low throughput, graduation or output rates in higher education institutions in South Africa (Jansen, 2012; van der Merwe and de Beer, 2006: 547). To the best of the researcher's knowledge no research has been conducted on improving throughput and output through student selection in Fashion at a university; this study addresses that gap.

### **1.3 THE INTERVIEW SELECTION PROCESS**

The interview for selection into the Fashion programme at the DUT takes place in the following order: pre-interview; interview; and assessment of the interview.

#### **1.3.1 Pre-interview**

The number of members on the panel and the number of interview panels vary in accordance with the number of staff members available at the time and the size of the applicant pool. If the applicant pool is large, additional

interview panels are set up. There are sometimes three or four panels conducting interviews concurrently.

### **1.3.2 The interview**

At the interview, applicants answer questions posed by the panel members in the following categories (*Appendix A*):

- comprehension
- articulation
- fashion awareness
- portfolio presentation and
- potential

There is no fixed mark allocation or criteria for mark allocation for each category as the panel members are deemed capable and are required to use discretion in the allocation of points. The interviewers are advised to ask the questions indicated on the interview protocol (*Appendix A*) or to use these questions as prompts. The interviewers are allowed to include questions that relate to current events, arts and culture, etc. In other words, if there are four interviews being conducted concurrently, each of these could be very different from the others in terms of the questions posed and the manner in which marks are allocated; they are very subjective.

### **1.3.3 Assessment of the interview**

After the applicants are interviewed, the interviewers discuss the candidate before making a decision on the applicants' suitability, preparedness and potential or suitability for admission into the programme. The staff members who make up the interview panel are not trained to conduct interviews, and the interviews do not have a time limit. The interviews can therefore vary in terms of duration for different applicants. The interview scores are added to the scores of the other entrance tests and applicants are accepted to the Fashion programme on a sliding scale, e.g. candidates who achieve an

overall 80% to 100% qualify first; the next intake will be all candidates who achieved between 70% to 79% and so on, until the desired number of candidates is selected.

The selection interview is important as it would appear to be the deciding factor especially since the interview carries the highest rating or weighting. It is also useful when making decisions on those candidates who are on the 'borderline'. Yet, the interview score is based on the intuition and perception of members of the selection panel who may comprise two or more staff members from the Department of Fashion; the selection panel is not constant; the selection interviews may vary in terms of time allocation or duration per applicant; and the interview questions may differ per applicant.

Hochschild (2003: 827) found that applicants from low socio-economic, cultural and/or educational backgrounds usually score lower points on achievement and aptitude tests. These applicants are at a disadvantage if they compete with applicants who have a better standard of living and educational background (Giannakopoulos and Buckley (2009: 329). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Report (2009), any selection mechanism or procedure must: be fair and transparent; provide equal opportunity; and must identify potential in applicants wanting to enter higher education - it is clear that the interview selection procedure in Fashion at the DUT does not meet the first two criteria. Basco, Lanchaster, Gilbert, Carey and Blue (2006:151) concur that selection interviews must identify, recognize and judge applicants' talents, skills, aspirations and potential for a programme of study.

As discussed earlier, interviews are regarded as one of the best methods of identifying and determining the potential of an applicant for a programme. They are most useful when the 'pool' of applicants is large and diverse in respect of social, economic, cultural and educational backgrounds (Basco, Lancaster, Gilbert, Carey and Blue, 2006: 151; van der Merwe and de Beer, 2006: 547; Koch and Foxcroft, 2003; Jansen, 2012: 14) as is evident in South Africa. Jansen (2012: 14) adds that programme specific written entrance



tests and interviews together with matriculation grade point averages, have been recommended as ideal for student selection in South Africa.

Duncan-Hewitt (1996: 109); Lemay, Lockyer, Collin and Brownell (2007: 573); Jansen (2012: 14 ); Giannakopoulos and Buckley (2009: 331); and Eva, Reiter, Trinh, Wasi, Rosenfeld and Norman (2009: 767) caution however that these interviews are ineffective if they differ in length and thoroughness, if there is more than one panel of interviewers, or if the questions differ. These researchers made recommendations for oral selection or interviews to be standardized or structured; hence the need for this study.

According to Van Eeden, de Beer and Coetzee (2001: 173), structured interviews are mainly included as part of the selection procedure because of the lack of predictive validity of matriculation results in recognizing salience and congruence of applicants to programmes. As there is very little evidence of correlation between academic performance in higher education and matriculation results, matriculation results alone cannot predict salience and congruence (Huysamen, 2000: 128). Ehrenfeld and Tabak (2000: 102) add that fair selection procedures will enable access to all South Africans, no matter their socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds, and structured interviews will allow for competition for admission on an equal footing. Jansen (2012: 14) concurs that these interviews would make it possible for applicants to present and market themselves on a basis of salience and congruence to a programme of study.

#### **1.4 SKILLS REQUIRED FOR A CAREER IN FASHION**

According to the Princeton Review (2009), academic achievement is only part of the requirements for Fashion Design as it is a highly creative and competitive career. The Review states further that the Fashion programme requires individuals who have been exposed to a multitude of experiences and who will bring with them socio-economic, cultural and educational

experiences that contribute to their creativity and sense of competition that are necessary for a career in Fashion. A career in Fashion not only requires life experiences that provide the ability to create and produce fashionable garments but also requires a wide a range of experiences that will enable researching and compiling trend reports that indicate which styles, colours, and fabrics will be popular for a particular season in the future (Princeton Review, 2009). The global nature of the Fashion business requires constant communication with suppliers, manufacturers, and customers which may entail travel several times a year to trade and fashion shows to learn about the latest fashion trends. Designers also may travel frequently to meet with fabric and materials suppliers, and with manufacturers who produce the final apparel products (Keiser and Garner, 2008: 68). Designers must have a strong sense of the aesthetic and an eye for colour and detail, a sense of balance and proportion, and an appreciation for beauty. Fashion designers also need excellent communication and problem-solving skills. Despite the advancement of computer-aided design, sketching ability remains an important advantage in fashion design (Florida, 2000: 230).

Keiser and Garner (2008: 68) explain that a career in Fashion requires an individual to be competent in drawing, creating and making patterns, and sewing. They add that a career in Fashion involves psychology, sociology, economics and cultural studies that relate directly to fashion.

Florida (2000: 230) highlights the importance of having the necessary skills and personality that demand the intellectual ability or 'savvy' to perform a number of tasks. These include the three abilities of environmental scanning, researching the target market, and psychographics or collecting psychological data to be able to 'cater' to clients to enable success in the Design/Fashion world (discussed in detail in Chapter 2).

Given the range of abilities required to be a Fashion designer, it is important that the procedures used to select students for admission into the programme must be rigorous, fair, reliable and inclusive.

## **1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

This study was concerned with the interview selection that is currently used as part of a selection battery by the Department of Fashion at the DUT. The need for this study arose because of the lack of structure of the current oral protocol or interview selection procedure in Fashion at the DUT; and the need to include a larger number of previously disadvantaged applicants into the Fashion programme.

The DUT like all other higher education institutions in South Africa must abide by the South African Higher Education Act of 1997. This Act stipulates that as higher education is one of the main allocators of life chances, entrance criteria and entrance tests must aim to increase access to applicants from a range of social, cultural and educational backgrounds, and a wide range of life experiences (Naidoo, 2000: 251). It is therefore important to examine career development which according to Muchmore (2002), has long been recognized in the narrative method used in the social sciences. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001: 188) emphasize that career choices are made long before application to higher education institutions are submitted because career identities are developed from early childhood through to adolescence.

Over the past three decades therefore, researchers such as Cohen, Duberley and Mallon (2004: 418); Blustein, Schultheiss and Flum (2004); Herr (2001: 199); Hartung and Borges (2005:441); Lindstrom and Benz (2002: 67); and Rojewski and Kim (2003: 92) have used the narrative research method to explore career development. The results of their studies revealed that career development and the process of choosing a career path are situated biographically. While the above studies used narratives to provide an understanding of career choices, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no known research has been conducted using narratives to provide an understanding of Fashion as a career choice. This study therefore takes place at the intersection between career theory and narrative inquiry.

## **1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY**

By fusing career theory and narrative inquiry within a systems framework, a deeper understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of a Fashion career is facilitated as it allows for the influences on the students' career experiences to be revealed by considering the interrelationship of past and present Fashion career experiences. The aim of this study was to investigate the narratives of the Fashion degree students at the DUT to identify a set of biographical variables that can be used for student selection.

In order to meet the above aim, the following objectives were addressed, to:

- identify the life experiences that contributed to the participant's Fashion identity;
- identify the life experiences that contributed to the participants' decision to pursue Fashion as a career;
- determine what life experiences contributed to the participants' choosing Fashion as a career;
- find out what personality types are best suited for admission to the Fashion programme.

It was envisaged that the findings of this study would contribute to the design of a framework for a standardised and structured interview selection procedure in Fashion at the DUT. This interview selection procedure would enable access to candidates who have a potential for a career in Fashion regardless of their socio-economic or cultural background.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

The following terms and definitions are used in this research.

### **1.7.1 Graduation or Output rate:**

Graduation or output rate can be explained as the percentage of students from a cohort who graduated from a programme of study (Essack, Lingiah, Mashige, Mtshali, Naidoo, Naidoo, Oostehuizen, and Suleman, 2009). According to Naidoo (2000: 24), academic preparedness is one of the factors that are linked to output as students who have a genuine interest in a programme are said to perform well and complete the programme in the minimum time.

### **1.7.2 Throughput rate or completion rate:**

Throughput rate is defined as the percentage of students that successfully complete a programme within the minimum prescribed time (Essack, Lingiah, Mashige, Mtshali, Naidoo, Naidoo, Oostehuizen and Suleman, (2009).

### **1.7.3 Student selection:**

Student selection is a procedure that is used to determine the degree of potential or a programme of study (Harris and Owen, 2007: 234).

## **1.8 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

**Chapter One** outlined the context, rationale and significance of this study and presented a brief overview of the forthcoming chapters.

**Chapter Two** presents a review of pertinent literature and the theoretical framework which underpins this study.

**Chapter Three** discusses the research methodology employed in this study.

**Chapter Four** discusses the findings of this study using both surface and deep themes of experiences of the participants.

**Chapter Five** concludes the study and offers recommendations for further research. It recognises the limitations of the study and elucidates the conceptual contributions of the inquiry. This chapter presents the framework for the oral selection protocol for student selection.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter One provided an introduction to this study. The research problem was identified and the rationale for this study was presented together with the research objectives. The research target and scope were described, and the structure of the dissertation was also clarified.

This chapter reviews narratives and narrative research, career theories and explored the theoretical framework that was used to provide an understanding of the participants' personal experiences and social resources that contributed to Fashion as a career.

#### **2.2 NARRATIVES AND NARRATIVE RESEARCH**

According to Mishler (1995: 88); Clandinin and Connelly (1994); Clark, Severy and Sawyer (2004: 24); and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), there is no single definition and no single method of conducting narrative research. Hawker (2002: 406) defines a narrative as "a spoken or written account of something". McAdams (1993) counters that narratives are not specific to the written or spoken as it can also include experiences or events that include visual, aural and tactile accounts of experiences and/or events.

Silverman (1998: 111) provides a more comprehensive definition. He explains that narratives are stories that can be either oral or written, that involve a series of interrelated experiences over time and the outcome/s of these experiences. Ainsworth and Hardy (2004: 155) concur that narratives are discursive resources that are used to make sense of experiences and make meaning of the self and relationship with others. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007: 38) assert that it is essential that the life of an individual be understood with reference to "the institutions within which his/her biography

is enacted” as narratives are structured, socialised and politicised by institutional and cultural conventions. The narrative researcher is therefore able to make sense of these experiences by constructing a “big picture” of experiences and connecting the experiences and to make sense of the experiences (Hawker, 2002: 406).

According to Polkinghorne (1988), meaning can be created by noting that experiences are part of a whole, and that experiences are the cause of or a result of past experiences. Narratives provide links, connections, coherence, meaning and sense that exhibit human activity as purposeful engagement in the world in a discourse that draws together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives (Polkinghorne, 1995: 5). The study of narratives thus enables the social science researcher to develop new theories, new methods and new ways of discussing and making meaning of individuals and society (Denzin, 2000).

Narrative research is a genre of qualitative research that aims to privilege lived experiences and serves as a means of understanding the experiences to make meaning through the stories of an individual or providing information about our social and cultural positioning (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Flick, 2009). Narrative research is a means of providing: background information about an individual; an understanding of the experiences that made and individual who they are; and why the individual became who they are (Denzin, 2003).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) refer to narrative research as both a phenomenon and a method as it studies the experiences that was experienced by the individual and is a means of inquiry. Chase (2005: 652) describes narrative research as the study of individual’s stories to provide and make meaning of their lives. The two main types of narrative research can be described as event and experience centred narratives.

Event centred narratives involve the recall of particular past events, in particular, the spoken recall of past events that the individual has experienced and assumes that these internal and individual experiences are most often constant (Andrew, Squire and Tamboukou, 2008).



Experience centred narratives on the other hand; examine stories that may be about general or imagined phenomena which usually are about things that have happened to the narrator or about things that they have heard about (Chase, 2005: 652). Andrew, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) assert that experiences of the individual vary over time and across the changing circumstances of an individual's life and that a single phenomenon may generate different accounts even from the same individual. An experience centred narrative assumes that personal narratives are sequential and meaningful accounts which represent experiences and display transformation (Josselson and Lieblich, 2001; Connelly and Clandinin, 2000: 3).

Within the social sciences though, 'narrative' and 'narrative research' has particular meanings; meanings that carry particular value and have ethical, ontological and epistemological positions.

This research is experience-centred which drew on the oral stories from the four year Fashion students during interviews and focussed on one aspect of their lives, which were their career development as successful undergraduate Fashion Design students.

### **2.3 DEFINITIONS OF CAREER**

According to Sullivan and Baruch (2009), the meaning of 'career' is ambiguous and there is no clear definition. Career can be defined in a number of ways but only the definitions of career as it applies to this study are discussed below.

Patton and Creed (2007: 49) describe career as a sequence of an individual's work experiences over time where the boundaries of work and life are inseparable. According to Wolfe and Kolb (1980: 1),

*"Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person....More than that; it concerns him or her in the*

*ever-changing contexts of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and ageing parents, the total structure of one's circumstances, are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances - evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction - constitute the focus and the drama of career development."*

Wolfe and Kolb (1980: 2); and Collin and Young (1992: 2) describe career and career development as a combination of changing environments, people and places during the course of an individual's life, that encompasses the individual.

## **2.4 CAREER DISCOURSE**

Career theories and models make sense of the experiences of individuals and rationalized sets of assumptions or hypotheses that allow for an explanation of the past to be able to predict the future. An overview of different career discourses presented below illustrates their application to career life history research.

### **2.4.1 Disposition Discourse**

The establishment of career development began with the core tenet regarding people as being matched to occupations rather than just finding jobs (Parsons, 1909). He asserts that career choice is based on three factors, namely: a clear understanding of the self; a clear understanding of the requirements, opportunities, or constraints of a particular career or occupation; and a true reasoning about the relationships of self and a particular career. His Trait factor theory argues that career satisfaction and success resulted from the fit of an individual to an occupation and emphasises individual differences. This theory stimulated considerable research in career development.

The Trait Factor theory assumes that individual traits are static, can be matched to career traits and ignores the fact that both individuals and work change over the life course; and that people are seldom confined to a single occupation or organization. This theory assumes that career choices are made once in a lifetime and that individuals commit themselves to just one occupation with close matches between individual traits and occupational requirements resulting in an individual's career success and job satisfaction (Baddeley and Singer, 2007: 179).

Holland (1996) maintains that individuals function and develop best in work environments that are compatible with their personality types. Holland's (1997) Person-Environment Fit theory is based on the notion that a career is reflective of an individual's personality and *vice versa* because they are attracted to certain jobs and the environmental conditions that the job offers. Holland (1997) based his theory of personality types on the assumption that people are more likely to choose a career that best suits their personality. He therefore organises people into personality categories that best match certain types of careers and work environments. This theory suggests how career choices are made and how study programme and satisfaction occurs.

Both Parsons and Holland advocate the notion of matching an individual's traits to career choices. This approach was derived from its cross-situational consistency and stability over time and is static in nature.

#### **2.4.2 Contextual Career Discourse**

Gottfredson's (1996) theory of Circumspection and Compromise focuses on the individual, their concerns, actions and career that take place within their social, cultural, historical, temporal and other contexts. This discourse addresses the relationship between career and institutions and the social order. It places importance on issues of power and ideology in career a career context (Cohen, 2004; Collin and Young, 2000).

### **2.4.3 Subjectivity and Narrative Discourse**

The Subjectivity and Narrative Discourse concerns unique interactions between the self and social experiences with the individual as the key player. The approach used by Clandinin and Connelly (1994: 418) is a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space to analyse the episodic interviews generated from the respondents. It addresses the way in which individuals develop and 'evolve' over time in the context of experiences. The Subjectivity and Narrative Discourse emphasises that attention be given to the language people use in interpreting themselves and their situations in narrating their experiences.

### **2.4.4 Process Discourse**

Super's (1957) theory of Career Development recognises that individual's go through changes as they mature and that their career patterns are determined by socio-economic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which individual's are exposed where career satisfaction is attained through work roles in which they can express themselves, implement and develop their self-concepts. Career maturity, a main concept in Super's theory, is manifested in the successful accomplishment of age and stage developmental tasks across the life span.

The underlying factor in Super's model is vocational self-concept that is developed through physical and mental growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, the general environment, and life experiences in general ( Zunker, 1994: 30).

A more holistic theory of career development is that of Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Axelrad and Herma (1951) who consider the whole person over time and propose the skills and experiences enjoyed in the three phases enables career development to take place. Isaacson and Brown's (2001: 23) interpretation of Ginzberg's theory is that an individual makes tentative career choices depending on their interests and personality at the time and may explore a few career options. Ginzberg provides tentative age groups for the career development process, and maintains that it is between the ages of 11

to 17 that an individual makes career choices which limits career options by choosing a job, or education and/or training that he/she will consider as being part of how they see themselves (Liebenberg, 2008: 581).

#### **2.4.5 Career Identity Discourse**

Identity refers to all of the beliefs, ideals, and values that help shape and guide a person's behaviour that gives an individual an integrated and cohesive sense of self (Costa, McCrae and Holland, 1984: 390).

Erikson (1980) proposed a Lifespan Model of Career Identity Development that takes place from birth to adulthood in five stages up to the age of 18 years. This theory places emphasis on a pre-determined order or stage/s that focuses on how individuals socialize and the effects of these social interactions on an individual's identity formation.

One of the main elements of Erikson's (1980) theory is that an individual develops a career identity in a series of stages based on the impact of social experiences across the entire lifespan. Chickering and Reisser (1993) expanded on Erickson's (1980) theory, and state that development takes place through age-related stages. They add that this occurs within a social context through the life experiences of an individual towards developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity, that is not sequential.

The Cognitive Identity Development Theory of Piaget (1958) states that an individual matures when they reason and interact with their surroundings from an early age and evolve to become a professional identity or professional 'persona' that facilitates the attainment of a particular career.

Josselson (1980) asserts that the development of an identity or sense of self emanates from the need to separate oneself from others, through influences such family origin, sense of agency and autonomy of the individual and through life experiences. Life experiences and lifestyles contribute to career

identity development that results in a clear career culture through the management and negotiation of their career aspirations and identities from historical events, social and cultural conditions (Josselson and Lieblich, 2001).

Mishler (2000) asserts that an individual has several identities which 'go together' to make up the identity of an individual. She adds that career identity comprises just one of the identities of an individual and no single identity dominates as the individual 'wears several hats' as and when the situation demands. Mishler (1995: 92) also asserts that the life experiences of an individual impacts and determines an individual's complete identity.

### **2.3.5 Career Decision and Choice Discourse**

Career development takes place as a result of learning and imitating the behaviour of others. Krumboltz (1990: 86) developed a theory of Career Decision Making and Development based on social learning or environmental conditions, events, genetic influences and learning experiences. He explains that people choose their careers based on learned behaviours and what they have learned.

Theorists such as Savikas (2001); and Young and Collin (2004) hypothesize that career decisions are made at critical points in an individual's life and that these critical points have a profound effect and influence. These career decisions could be as a result of educational choices. Other career decision-making theories are concerned with ongoing choices of an individual that take place across the life span and which are influenced by experiences and knowledge about a particular career.

Krumboltz's (1990: 87) social learning theory of career choice is based on the premise that multiple learning and life experiences are gained through encounters with people, institutions and events in an individual's environment. This theory proposes that the four main factors that influence career choices are: genetic influences, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences; and task approach skills. These four factors lead

individuals to develop beliefs about the nature of a particular career and their role in life, thus providing for career choices to be made. This theory also asserts that life's learning experiences are observed and 'learned' from role models such as parents, teachers and heroes. Krumboltz (1990: 85) mentions that positive modelling, reward and reinforcement are most likely to lead to the development of appropriate career planning skills and career behaviour. This social learning theory when applied should indicate the people, institutions and events that impacted career choices and the origins of a career choice.

More recent discourse on choosing careers have come from Josselson, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (2004) who state that life experiences with family and mentors have a definite impact and influence on career development. They add that individuals sometimes choose careers to please their parents and in many such instances, it is the parents who did not have the opportunities for such careers but want what they think is best for their children.

Cochran (1994) concurs that mentors or role models have a profound impact on career choice. They also maintain that individuals are often attracted to a career because it is portrayed as providing high status, high profile, being in control of several people or as being a highly paid career. This can be attributed to the media hype or celebrity status that some careers are given (Josselson, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 2004).

The disparate nature of the existing theories and the need to use more than one theory to describe the complexity of the field of career development has given rise to the concept of integration or convergence within the discipline (Borgen, 1991; Osipow, 1990; Patton and McMahon, 1999, 2006).

According to holistic career theorists Gintzberg, Gintzberg, Axelrad and Herma (1951), career development must consider the whole person over time. They postulate that career decision making is a process that occurs from puberty until twenty years old and that it is irreversible once

crystallisation of the career decision process takes place. They further explain the career decision-making process in the following three phases.

- The **fantasy phase** which takes place until about the age of eleven when children role play and imagine themselves in various work situations. It is during this phase that children begin to think about which careers they might like to have in the future.

- The **tentative phase** is when children begin to make tentative or preliminary career choices based upon information gathered through the following sub-phases:

- interest sub-phase occurs between the ages 11 to 12 when the individual makes more concrete decisions about his or her likes, dislikes and interests.

- capacity sub-phase, at age 13 or 14 is when the teenager becomes more aware of his or her particular abilities and skills as they relate to a particular and potential career.

- value sub-phase, at age 15 or 16, is when the individual considers his/her personal values and priorities in life, as well as his or her occupational lifestyle.

- transition sub-phase, at the age of 17 or 18 years is the point at which the individual becomes aware of the decision for making a vocational choice.

- The **realistic phase** is when the individual begins to crystallize and specify occupations of interest. This final phase is made up of the following sub-phases:

- the exploration sub-phase is when the individual begins to narrow his/her career choices after considering the various options from their interests, skills and knowledge that they have accumulated from birth to this stage of their lives.



- during the crystallisation phase, the individual commits to a specific career field.

- in the specification phase, the individual selects a job or professional training program as required by their choice of career.

Ginzberg (1984) stressed that career choice is a lifelong process of decision-making that begins very early in an individual's life and is a means of obtaining satisfaction from their work and lifestyle. The emphasis of this theory is that individual's make their career decisions which balance their interests and values with the opportunities and talents available, as well as the cost of pursuing the opportunities.

An explanation of Ginzberg's theory of Career Development according to Birch and Miller (2007b: 18); and Considine and Zappala (2002: 129), has the basic tenet that career aspiration, occupation choice and job entry constitutes aspects of individuals' development as it works on the assumption that occupational choice has an irreversible process that occurs in three stages of individual growth. Ginzberg believes that skills and experiences that are acquired and enjoyed early in life will affect future career decisions and choices (Birch and Miller, 2007b: 18). The three simplified stages in Ginzberg's Theory of Career Development are from:

- birth to 11 years old when an individual fantasises about a career according to his/her perceptions of a career;
- 11 to 17 years old when an individual is tentative about the choice of career and is yet to make a definite choice; and from
- 17 years old onwards which involves making a realistic decision about a career.

Ginzberg's theory asserts that the process of developing an identity begins at infancy, from birth to 11 years old when children realise that they are separate and unique individuals. The process of identity development continues throughout childhood and becomes the focus of adolescence. According to Erikson (1950: 235), an individual's identity is a

multidimensional concept that can include among others, occupational goals. It is during the adolescent stage from age eleven to seventeen when an individual explores career dimensions before making a commitment to career aspects of their identity as they move into early adulthood. These occupational goals are re-evaluated to suit aspects of their identity as their life circumstances change (Birch and Miller, 2007: 18; Erikson, 1980). The process of achieving occupational goals and occupational identities ends when the individual has made a commitment to an occupation after exploring the various career options (Birch and Miller, 2007: 20).

Ginzberg expands on Super's (1981) theory and adds that career choices is as a result of and results from the life experiences of family, community, culture, leisure time, friends and schools that best match or is congruent with an individual's aptitude, interest and values. Life experiences in respect of people, institutions and events have once again been named in Krumboltz's (1990) social learning theory of Career Choice as it is based on the premise that careers are the product of an unaccountable number of encounters and experiences with people, institutions and events.

The contextualising career discourse of Ginzberg (1984) locates individuals among others within social, education and cultural contexts and addresses issues such as relationships between career and institution in relation to the skills, interests and knowledge that was accumulated over time. Ginzberg's (1951) theory of Career Development also concerns the unique interactions of the individual and their social experiences, and addresses the manner in which the individual constructs him/herself over time and in context.

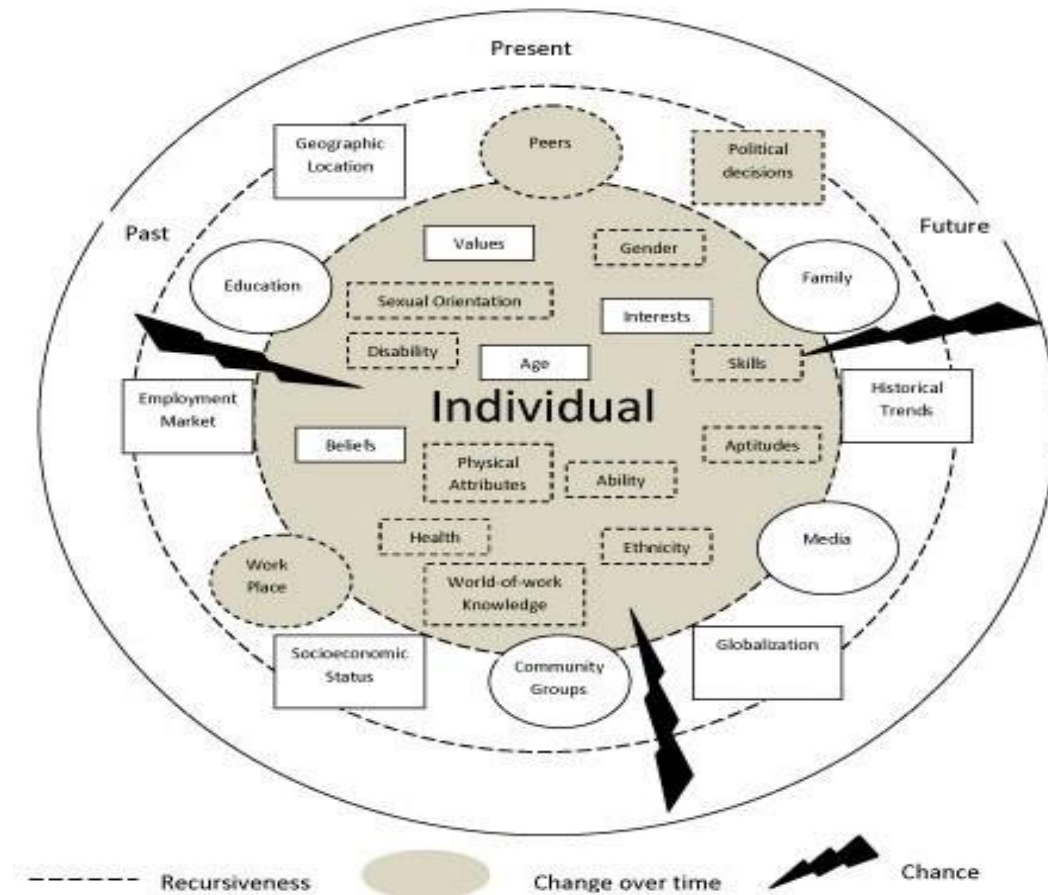
In an attempt to classify career theories into meta-theory and to present an integrative model that represents the individual within the various social influences and institutions, Patton and McMahon (2006) used the Systems Theory Framework (STF).

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY**

The purpose of a theoretical framework is to support and strengthen a research study by describing the theory/theories that will inform how the research is conducted and how it originated (Vithal and Jansen, 2004: 19). The Systems Theory Framework (STF) was selected for this study as this theory has proved to be applicable across socio-economic, cultural and educational; and considers a range of intrapersonal influences or factors such as gender, age, abilities, beliefs, values and personality (Arthur and McMahon, 2005: 218; Eiselen and Geyser, 2004: 121). All these factors are considered to be components of an individual's make-up and must therefore be considered in terms of the social structures such as family, peers, community groups, educational institutions, media and workplaces in which the individual interacts. Since the features of an environmental-social system consists of among others: socio-economic, cultural, and educational background; life experiences act as stimuli within their social system which determines their characteristic, aspirations, commitment and personality (Cole and Knowles, 2001 in van Schalkwyk, 2010: 685).

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) is an integrative model that Source: Patton and McMahon (1999: 164) emphasises and locates the many facets of an individual such as ethnicity, gender, interests, personality, attitudes and beliefs among others within social influences such as socio-economic, educational and cultural circumstances of the past, present and future. Figure 2A, illustrates the dynamic of the individual in relation to social influences.

FIGURE A: THE SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK



Source: Patton and McMahon, 1999:164.

The STF influence of experiences changes over time and is represented in a circular system of life experiences whether accidental or deliberate. These life experiences are key features that provide stimuli within the system which are formulated as a natural source within an individual's career (Patton, 2008: 135; Chen, 2005: 314; Engin and McKeown, 2012). The influences of these experiences are contextually located and linked within time: past; present; and future. According to Patton and McMahon (2006b: 8), the past influences the present, and together, past and present affect the future and thus the personality of the individual.

According to Van der Merwe and De Beer (2006: 547); and Hall and Chandler (2005: 7), the personality of an individual is as an influential factor

in academic achievement as several aspects of an individual's character which is as a result of life experiences, render an individual (un) suitable for a programme of study.

The Person-environment Fit Typology theory was developed by Holland (Zunker, 1994: 49) to organize people into personality categories that best match different programmes of study, jobs and work environments. This theory suggests how career choices are made and how study programme satisfaction occurs. Holland suggested that people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities (Savickas, 2002: 157). According to McMahon, Patton and Watson (2005: 14), Holland based his theory of personality types on the assumption that people are more likely to choose a career that is reflective of their personality. These researchers believe that individuals are attracted to certain programmes of study, jobs and work environments that best reflect their personality.

Spokane, Meir and Catalano (2000: 146); and Tsabari, Tziner and Meir (2005: 235) explain that Holland's theory classifies personalities and work environments into six types, namely: realistic; investigative; artistic; social; enterprising; and conventional personality types (known as RIASEC). According to Holland (1997 in Tsabari, Tziner and Meir, 2005: 235), the choice and successful completion of programme of study is an expression of an individuals' personality that most often means that the personality of the student is compatible with the programme of study. While an individual can sometimes possess a part of each of the six types of personality, there is one type of personality that dominates and is more evident, thus the categories below represent the personality types:

- A **realistic** individual is more likely to be an outdoor type of person who prefers to work with tools and machines and work that requires strength and co-ordination. He/she may not choose careers that requires a degree of socializing. These individuals

would be best suited to jobs such as farming, driving trucks, building and carpentry.

- An **investigative** personality is primarily interested in logic and concepts and enjoys abstract problem solving. This type of personality would be best suited to working with information of an abstract or theoretical nature which is most often scientific. These individuals will be best suited to pharmacy, mathematics, dentistry or scientific research.
- An **artistic** personality tends to be creative and thus enjoys expressing their feelings and ideas, dislikes rules and regulations and enjoys music, drama and art. This personality type would be best suited to art, acting, dancing, designing, composing music and painting.
- A **social** personality tends to enjoy the company of other people, especially to help them and they tend to be warm and caring people. This personality type will be best suited to nursing, counseling, tourism, etc.
- An **enterprising** person tends to enjoy the company of other people, but mainly as a leader to dominate or persuade rather than help them; they enjoy actions more than thought. Suitable careers for this type of personality will be sales, law, headmaster, journalism and business owner.
- A **conventional** type of person like rules, regulations, structure and order. They are well organized with little or no imagination and therefore are best suited to secretarial work, typing, filing or working in a mass production.

The Person-environment Fit theory according to Feldman, Smart and Ethington (2000: 238), indicates that student satisfaction with a programme of study has a greater chance of the individual continuing to higher levels of study or beyond the first qualification, i.e. honours or master's programmes. They add that the Person-environment Fit theory when used in conjunction with other theories and concepts best identifies students' levels of stability, suitability and enjoyment of a programme.

The STF of career development includes the traditional approaches of predictive career theories for analysing a participant's career development using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000: 48) three dimensional narrative inquiry space. They add that this concept recognises that all individuals belong and interrelate with and within a social system, be it socio-economically, culturally and/or educationally. The STF of career development separates the individual into two components, the first being the factors internal to the individual, such as gender, values, beliefs ethnicity, age, ability and skills; and the second being those factors external to them, such as their socio-economic, family, peers, workplace and political decision of the past, present and future.

In order for the researcher to frame the research and organise the relevant literature, the conceptual frameworks below, were used.

## **2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Conceptual frameworks, according to Smyth and Murray (2000: 314), are derived from a set of broad ideas and theories that help a researcher to identify the problem that they are concerned with and to frame the research questions, to find and organise the relevant literature.

Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin (2004: 121) conceptualised the relationships between some of the inner and outer factors of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000: 48) framework (Figure 2B) which they felt affected the goals and commitments of students. They identified three areas, namely: the pre-entry

attributes of family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling, which affect the students' intentions, goals/commitments, thereby impacting on their academic performance and staff interaction (Figure 2B).

### Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure

Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure

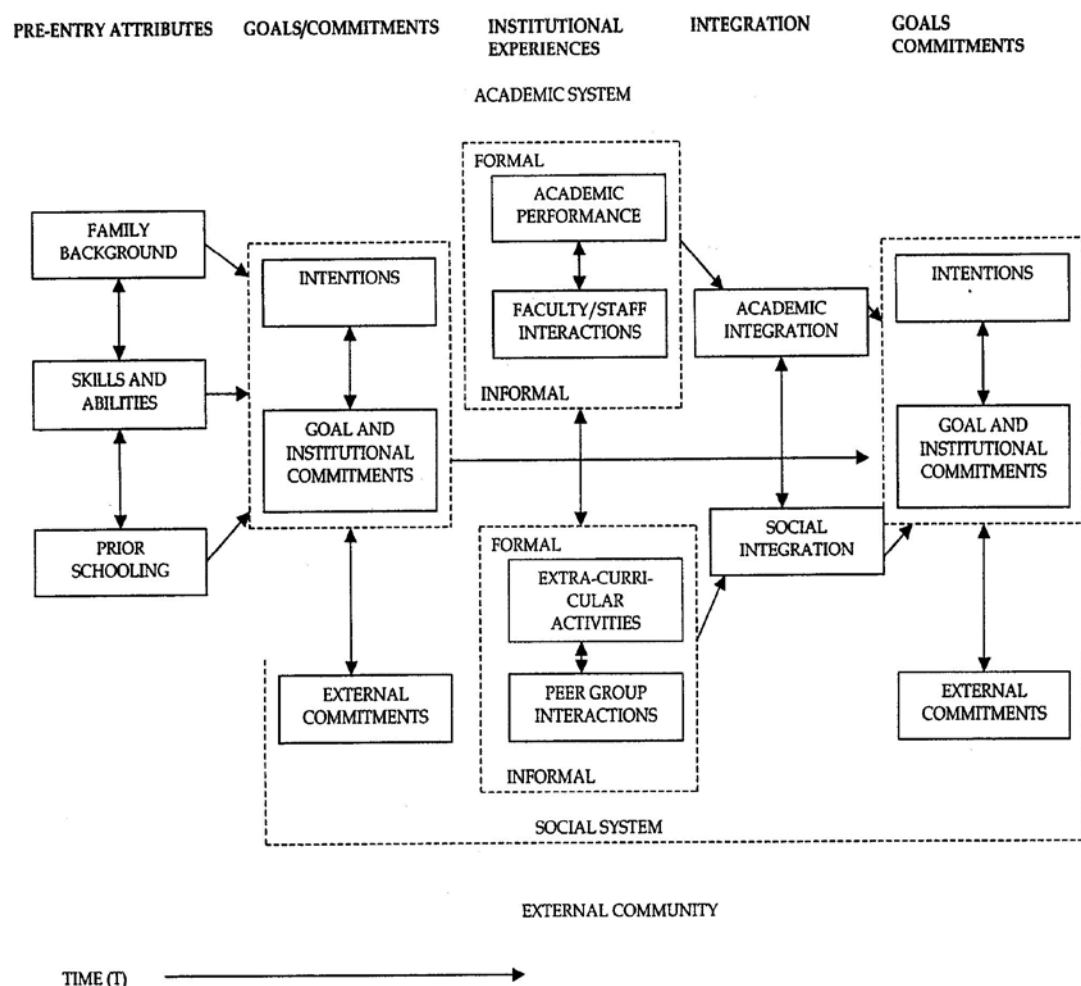


Figure 2B: Longitudinal model of institutional departure (Source: Tinto, 1993)

According to Birch and Miller (2007: 18), Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure explains family background experiences, experiences of skills and abilities and experiences of prior schooling that have impacted



and influenced career choices. Within the family background category are the socio-economic, cultural and beliefs and values of the family that have influence as it concerns the degree of the individual's exposure to the arts, popular culture, music, the arts and fashion. The beliefs and values of the applicants will illustrate the family's attitude to work and education, financial and moral support and interest of the individual. The skills and abilities concern the interests of the applicant and language proficiency in the medium of instruction and the influence of peers and role models as important in choosing a career. Prior schooling is also an important influence, this being determined by the school attended and the type and quality of teaching and learning (Birch and Miller, 2007: 18; Juang and Silberesen, 2002: 8).

Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure posits that an individual usually withdraws from higher education when there is a lack of congruence, suitability and/or 'fit' between the individual, the academic and the social system (Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004: 121). Tinto (1993) believes that positive life experiences of an individual, with regard to family background, skills and abilities and/or prior schooling, reinforces persistence, commitment and determines whether an individual is suitable for and persists in higher education. Tinto (1993 in Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004: 121) asserts that the level of commitment to the programme of study is largely dependent on the students' pre-entry characteristics and therefore advises that (un)suitability if identified before enrolment, that is, during the student selection procedures and processes, will affect withdrawal or retention in higher education, respectively. Since the above pre-entry characteristics cannot be identified solely in written entrance tests, a combination of written and oral selection interviews will make the selection process more reliable (Jansen, 2012: 12; Koch, 2007: 102).

The model in Figure 2C was adapted from Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure to illustrate the pre-entry characteristics and factors

that must be considered for student selection for the Fashion programme. Family background factors such as socio-economic status, parental education level, family resources; skills and abilities concern communication skills; language proficiency and prior schooling concern the teaching and learning styles of the high school attended by the applicant.

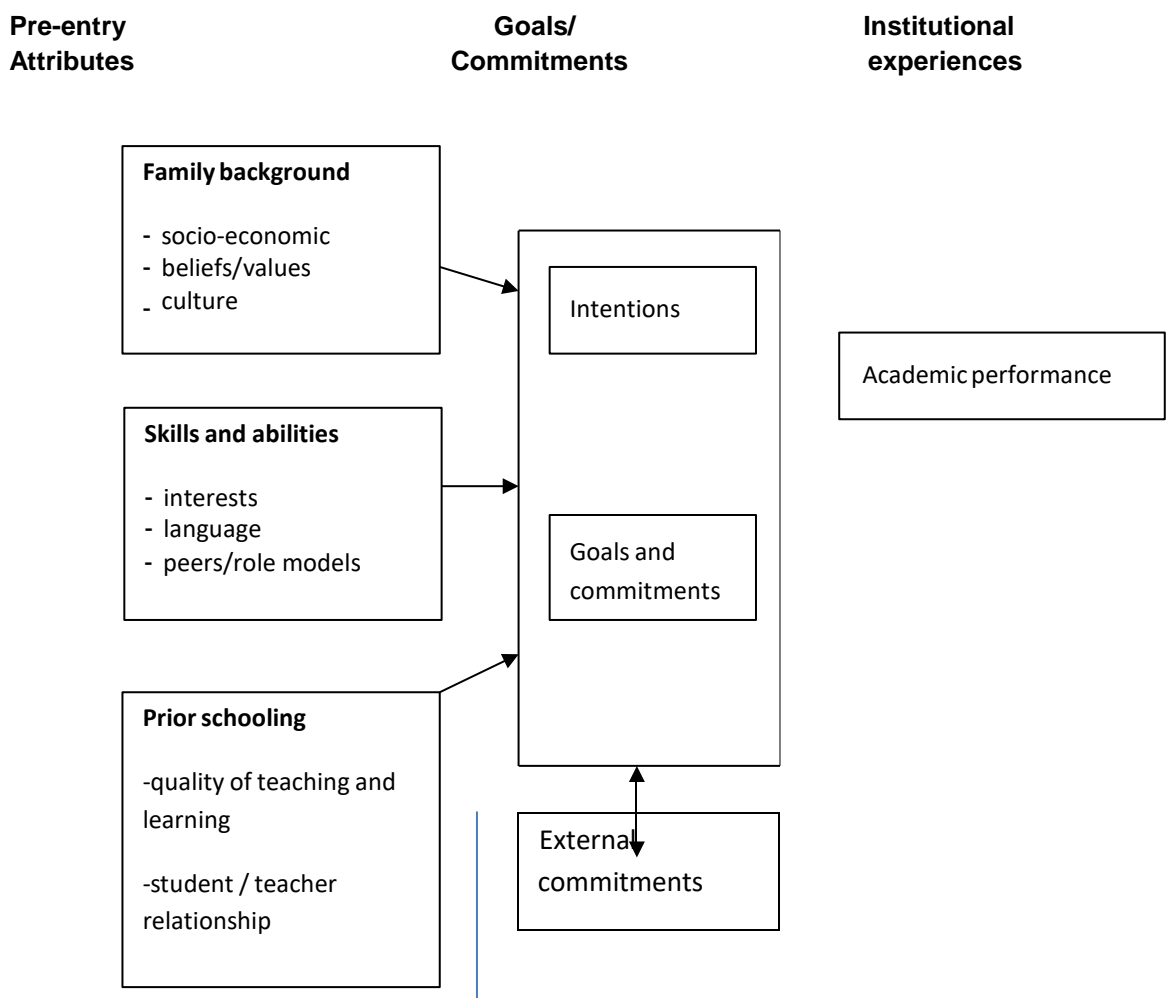


Table 2C: Researcher's adaptation of Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure

Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure posits that choosing a career is influenced by family, skills and abilities and prior schooling which are considered to be environmental factors that either enhances or inhibits career choices (Birch and Miller, 2007b: 18). Ginzberg (1972 in Birch and Miller, 2007b: 18) concedes that career choice is a life-

long process of decisions, that is also related to an individual's goals in relation to the realities of personality type of an individual.

The above theories of Tinto and Ginzberg are linked to the career aspirations of applicants for higher education in general and the Fashion programme in particular as it advocates that career identities are developed from birth to the time an individual makes application to the Department of Fashion at the DUT. These theories also relate to fashion as a career, as Florida (2000: 230) believes that fashion is most often a career choice if an identity, choice, decision and personality fulfils that of the fashion career requirements.

## **2.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

From birth to 11 years, children have fanciful ideas about what they want to become and as their identity changes, so too does their career aspirations. When they are adolescents, they explore career goals that best suit their personality and interests. According to Isaacson and Brown's (2001: 23) interpretation of Ginzberg's theory, an individual makes tentative career choices depending on their interests and personality at the time and may explore a few career options. It is between the ages 11 to 17 that an individual make career choices which limits career options by choosing a job or additional education and/or training such as attending a Fashion school, and once the individual enters their chosen job or career it becomes a part of how they see themselves (Liebenberg, 2008: 581).

The process of achieving an identity during adolescence serves as a basis for adult expectations and goals (Patton, 2008: 138). As individuals enter early adulthood, they use their current understanding of who they are to develop a construct that serves as the link between the identity developed in adolescence and adulthood (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2000). The link between childhood, adolescence and early adulthood is an integration of an

individual's past, present, and future together with environmental factors of family, skills and abilities and prior schooling (Ready, 2010: 272).

## 2.5 PRE-ENTRY ATTRIBUTES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The literature reviewed below are the factors that influence career identity, decision and choice have been based on the Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure (Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin, 2004:121) outlined above. This model consists of the pre-entry attributes that were as a result of experiences of family background, skills and ability, and prior schooling.

### 2.5.1 Family Background

Brown (2002: 49) posits that the most influential factors that are responsible for transferring career choices is the family. The family background includes factors such as socio-economic circumstances, beliefs and culture as explained below.

Table 2.2: family background factors

<b><u>Family background</u></b>	
- socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents' education level</li> <li>parents' occupation</li> <li>number of parents in the household</li> <li>number in family</li> <li>neighbourhood / community</li> <li>rural/urban</li> <li>resources/opportunities</li> </ul>
-beliefs, values and attitudes to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>culture</li> <li>gender</li> </ul>

Applications for higher education institutions come from various backgrounds; some are socio-economically disadvantaged while others come from affluent households; some from strong family structures in which

the parents are professionals or are highly educated, while other applicants come from a single parent household and/or have parents with limited educational background (Rumberger, 2003: 9). Blevins (2002: 51) noted that low levels of parents' education can retard adolescents' career development. Applicants whose parents have limited education and income are less likely to study at a higher education level.

First-generation students face many challenges, more so for South African students who often are the first in their family to attend a higher education institution. The differences in applicants' environments, often where there is a lack of comprehension of studies in higher education, has a negative influence on success (Hay, 2008: 939; Maree, Aldous, Hattingh, Swanepoel and van der Linde, 2006: 231). Literature indicates that financial burden is one of the major influences impacting on student academic achievement (Hay, 2008: 939; Levin, 2007: 1385).

A study conducted by Bandura (2002: 217), revealed that the most effective variable was the parents' education on the career path of an individual. In another study conducted by Smart and Thompson (2001: 439), it was noted that that females talented in traditionally male dominated higher education programmes viewed their career choices as reflective of interests originating from early family influence, exposure to the subject and/or educational opportunities. In a similar study, Ferry (2006: 1); and Maze (2002: 24) found that most applicants for places in higher education institutions believe that they were inspired by family members' occupations.

It would appear that school-related social capital such as involvement of parents in school, friends in school and student / teacher relationships relates to preparation activities that has been shown to significantly improve higher education attendance rates (Horn and Xianglei 1998). Robbins, Lauver, Davis, Langley and Carlstrom (2004: 262); and Bandura, Barbaranelli,

Caprara and Pastorelli (2001: 189) believe that when students gain a positive feeling of success and encouragement from parents and school personnel at their high school, they may develop a positive attitude towards education and be more likely to pursue post-secondary education. The results of studies conducted by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994: 81); and Michalko (2001) revealed that high-achieving students were greatly influenced and motivated by their parents.

Two parent families according to Perna and Titus (2005: 494) usually have more resources to devote to their children and are thought to more easily find the time to nurture and encourage their children. In families where both the parents work or when an individual is being raised in a single parent household, finding time to have a close, nurturing and encouraging relationship is difficult (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak and Cribbie, 2007: 261). Bandura (2000: 75); and Perna and Titus (2005: 489) claim that a single parent may not be able to spend time encouraging the completion of homework or take the time to attend school functions and may neglect to discipline their child.

According to Brown (2002: 178), family size, composition and economic circumstance are often intertwined, in that more poor families are headed by either unmarried mothers, low-wage earning fathers or both mothers and fathers and they have more children than they can affordably manage and are thus deprived of attention, academic assistance and encouragement, whereas those from more economically affluent home circumstances have many more life opportunities, including education.

Beauregard (2007: 102) believes that regardless of family composition or circumstance, children whose families provide supervision and support, and who have aspirations for their children, tend to provide the opportunities for their children's academic success. Many students are first-generation students and live off-campus. McFarlane (2008: 25) identifies factors such as commuting to campus, noisy conditions at home or inadequate study space as impeding optimum academic achievement.

### **2.5. 1.1 Socio-economic factors**

According to Ferry (2006: 1); and Levin (2007: 1381), socio-economic factors may serve as a barrier to career development, especially in cases where the family's financial circumstances prevent preparation for a chosen career through lack of opportunity, resources and stimuli. Smart and Thompson (2001: 439) also contend that the socio-economic status (SES) of the family includes parents' education level, occupation and family resources.

Affluent communities often live in affluent neighbourhoods that have more amenities such as libraries and recreational facilities such as afterschool activities, and education stimuli, than working class or poor neighbourhoods (Kuh, 2001: 66). Affluent neighbourhoods are usually inhabited by highly educated people and people from these neighbourhoods are expected to continue their education at university level. In neighbourhoods that are struggling and/or impoverished, may regard survival as more important than education after high school. Families with limited economic resources tend to prioritise their resources to household necessities.

Applicants from affluent neighbourhoods are more likely to have more educational support and resources to help them gain life experiences. According to Smart, and Thompson (2001: 439), poverty has a negative effect on students' school performance and students who are disadvantaged are more likely to repeat a level of study or drop-out of higher education.

### **2.5.1.2 Beliefs and values**

Beliefs and values can be described as the evaluative standards that influence an individual's behaviour so as to reach a desired end result (Gore and Wade, 2000: 238).

According to Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000: 36); and Ryan, Solberg and Brown (1996: 87), values are considered to be generational in that young

people may be more concerned with a balanced lifestyle, flexible work schedules, high salaries, prestigious job titles or intensive working hours. In a study of values among young people, Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg (2002: 101) found evidence that achieving work-life balance was of high importance to the participants. While another study found that young people did not place as much importance on work as the previous generation did (Smola and Sutton, 2002: 53).

Since parents are their children's first teachers, the home environment shapes individual's initial views and they adopt their parents' beliefs, expectations, and attitudes about education (Ellwood and Jencks, 2004: 36). Parents impact on their children's conceptions of the place that education has on their lives; their (un)importance of achieving academically and their use of education as an opportunity or as a barrier for further education and career development (Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg, 2002: 101). Parents' aspirations for their children may originate from that which was denied them for political and/or financial reasons. The degree of encouragement given to children is most often reflected in their children's confidence, motivation, beliefs, values and academic performance (Pascarella, 2001: 20).

Family processes of interaction, communication, and behaviour influence what the child learns about work and work experiences. Attitudes about school and work, educational and career goals and aspirations, and values have a long-term impact on a youth's career choices, decisions, and plans. Parents are considered to be the primary daily models by which cultural standards, attitudes and expectations determine the eventual adequacy of self-acceptance and confidence, of social skills and of sex roles. Children respond to the manner in which parents work and their attitudes and behaviours while working. A negative attitude to work will cause their children to have the same negative attitude (Kuh, Hu and Vesper, 2000: 228).

Through the process of educating their children about life roles, parents can influence the employability skills and values that children subsequently adopt. Grinstad and Way (1993: 50) provide examples of this in instances such as when a mother advises her daughter to become self-sufficient and financially



independent. On the other hand, some families direct their resources first to the male members of a family, giving less hope and encouragement for higher education to their daughters. In addition, some parents, particularly working class or lower-income parents may hold values that place girls as homemakers and place less emphasis on occupational preparation. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001: 188) are of the belief that the self-efficacy of girls with respect to career opportunities is linked to the economic support they can expect to receive from their parents.

According to Butts and Lockwood (2003: 691); and Bakshi, Gandhi, Shah and Maru, (2012: 11), career choices can be unconsciously made in respect of family heritage where certain occupations and careers are given importance or when the individual or their parents have a need to satisfy an unfulfilled childhood dream or to actualize the dreams and wishes passed on to them by their family (Pines and Yanai, 2001: 172).

While Perna and Titus (2005 in Hilgendorf, 2012: 112) posit that the individual may consider a career path as being their own preference when in fact it originated in early childhood and from the attitude and aspirations of the parents and family. Beauregard (2007: 108) therefore suggests that it is sometimes counter-productive when an individual submits to their parent's choice of a career, and conversely so when the individual submits to a career choice of their parent's for which they have no interest, aptitude or values.

Other families may attribute work to raising or maintaining the standard of living of the previous generation (Bu and McKeen, 2001: 67). They add that individuals may want to take full advantage of the opportunities that were denied their parents, due to economic and political restrictions. Lent, Brown, Nota and Soresi (2003: 101) believe that it is no longer a matter of choice for a woman to work but can be considered a necessity to supplement the family income or to be able to afford luxuries.

Individuals with single, unemployed and/or economically disadvantaged parents, may be raised in different family structures on which to model their own values and attitudes concerning their career choices (Prediger, 2002:

211). Smola and Sutton (2002: 53) conducted a study of academically high-achieving girls and found that their education and career plans were significantly influenced by the social pressure of having to give up work to care for their children. They add that these girls are more likely to choose careers that can easily combine work and family, in other words, more feminized careers such as teaching, nursing and fashion (Gore, and Wade, 2000: 239). Occupational sex segregation is perpetuated for these reasons. Female dominated career choices may not be encouraged or supported by family and parents for male children. Badgett and Folbre (2003: 60) found that men and women in occupations that do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes were seen as a negative influence in career choices. These studies indicate that the values, attitudes, demographics, barriers, opportunities, and support perceived to exist in one's environment, impacts the development of career interests (Gore and Leuwerke, 2000: 238).

### **2.5.1.3 Culture**

Culture represents, describes, and explains the life-ways of diverse groups of people; culture includes all the learned, appropriate and acceptable behavior as a result of being members of the same group or community (Fouad, 2002: 283). He adds that family influences may be even stronger for individuals in cultures where respect for and obedience to one's parents is a high priority. Family attitudes and values may be a determinant of an individual's career choice (Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg, 2002: 72). Through the process of educating their children about life roles, parents can influence their employability skills and values and attitude to study (Birch and Miller, 2007b: 49). They state further that the occupational choices of children reflect the family priorities in respect of work and family and the value that is placed on both.

The clearly defined cultural roles of gender and career aspirations, preference and choice often undergo different socialization experiences, they learn different gender roles and behaviour patterns, and hence develop different interests. These gender roles and interests later become the

dominant factors in career choice. The gender studies of Fouad (2002: 283) revealed that more male students preferred realistic, investigative and

Family attitudes and values may be a determinant of an individual's career choice (Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg (2002: 72). Through the process of educating their children about life roles, parents can influence the employability skills and values that children subsequently adopt. Birch and Miller (2005b: 49) add that the occupational choices of children reflect the family priorities in respect of work and family and the value that is placed on both.

Cultural background is a part of identity and issues such as racism and inequality however, as individuals interact with members of another culture, the culture can be assimilated to allow the individual to become bicultural or to function effectively in both cultures (Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg, 2002: 72).

## **2.6 SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

### **2.6.1 Interests**

Some individuals are better suited and have more potential to careers than others, due to personality type, physical and mental skills, interests, abilities and limitations (Brown, 2002b: 510). People's ability to make the most of factors of life events over which they have little or no control, can also influence the careers they choose and how they progress in them. The skills and abilities discussed below are the interests, language and role models that can influence an individual's career choice.

Table 2.3.: Skills and abilities that influence career choice

<b><u>Skills and abilities</u></b>
- interests
-role model and peer influence
-language

### **2.6.2 Praise and reward**

Owie (2003: 12) takes the position that the choice of a career is as a result of the individual's intrinsic interest in the field. While career choices may be highly influenced by other factors, it is, however, expected that intrinsic interest remains a primary factor that will inevitably lead to career satisfaction. Where intrinsic interest is lacking, no amount of training, motivation or gratification would significantly increase the individual's professional effectiveness. He posits that large numbers of prospective higher education students find themselves applying to higher education institutions because they are intrinsically motivated and hence highly interested in a career.

### **2.6.3 Role Models and peer influences**

Role models have been defined as a person or persons whose lives and activities influence another in some way (Flouri and Buchanan, 2002: 38). A role model is chosen by an individual for some easily identifiable trait, such as gender or race (Gibson and Pennington-Gray, 2005: 99; Karunanayake and Nauta, 2004: 228). Role models may be important to an individual because of special accomplishments such as a woman in the field of engineering, science or electronics (Chen, 2005: 252). Individuals perceive role models to be especially important for those who want to pursue nontraditional careers (Karunanayake and Nauta, 2004: 228).

Despite studies showing that role models influence career decisions, it is unknown whether role models have a direct influence on career choices (Gore and Leuwerke, 2000: 93). Role models may provide learning experiences that increase the likelihood of choosing a specific career. Individuals who have been mentored were more likely to pursue that career and believe that they would be as successful in that occupation (Karunanayake and Nauta, 2004: 228). According to Gore and Leuwerke (2000: 93) assert that role models provide learning experiences that increase interests in various educational and career fields. (DeSantis and Quimby, 2004: 41) found that self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between

role model influence and occupational choice, indicating that role models had both indirect and direct effects on career choice.

Karunanayake and Nauta (2004: 228) posit that friends and peer groups are an important factor in career choices. Chen (2005: 252) asserts that individuals are highly influenced by their friends because they have the same or similar interests and also fear being separated in a higher educational environment.

#### **2.6.4 Language**

Languages include a cultural context and a person's home language makes permanent changes to the individual's brain (Jandt, 1995:93). Language is a set of symbols shared by a community which facilitates the sharing and communicating of their experiences (van Staden and Erasmus-Krizinger, 2002: 54). The relationship between a language and culture in which the language is used depends on the social context for learning and teaching the language, and the social functions that the language assumes. A native language is entrenched in an individual's socialization and one that transmits aspects of that culture from one generation to the next, such as values, beliefs, and rules for social behavior. This intrinsic relationship of languages and culture of an individual is that it operates at an unconscious level and is better gained informally from interaction with family and peers than through formal education.

When English is spoken as a second language and when it is the language of instruction, proficiency in English is essential for full educational, political, and economic participation in the larger society. Thus, English second language speakers must be able to function according to the rules of the English-dominant culture. While the native of a culture acquires these rules quite naturally and unconsciously, the process for English second language speakers has to acquire a second set of rules for behavior that must coexist beside the first.

Reay, David and Ball (2005) believe that competence in the language of tuition helps in developing students' conceptual confidence in their academic

discipline, thus the complex conceptual skills that higher education demands, such thinking at a theoretical level and applying knowledge to new and different situations, would be more easily achieved by students for whom the language of tuition is not an issue. The ability to read and engage critically with academic literature, in order to write academically sound assignments and essays, is greatly facilitated if the person is accustomed to the language. Therefore language confidence can be seen as a significant factor in an unprepared or underprepared student having the courage to seek assistance from a lecturer (Jansen, 2012: 12).

Minimi and Ovando (in Ormorod, 2003: 55) are of the opinion that language acquisition promotes students' cognitive development and enhances communication, interaction and interpersonal understanding among students. Ormorod (2003: 55) maintains that background knowledge and experiences of language will help in processing information from which they will draw on to understand and elaborate on new information. Koch and Kerkman (2007: 79) emphasise the need for higher education institutions to select and nurture high achievers and well-rounded applicants who will contribute to a country's future and to sustainable development hence the importance of student selection.

As language is considered to be a set of symbols that is shared by a community and which facilitates the sharing and communicating experiences, the target language is seen as the key to a better life and the home language deteriorates while a new language is learned (Van Staden, Marx and Erasmus-Krizinger, 2002). Having background knowledge of the language of instruction will enable the student to use their prior knowledge of language from which to build on prior knowledge and discover relationships among concepts and ideas (Ormorod, 2003: 57).

## 2.7 PRIOR SCHOOLING

How children begin learning and the educational establishments that they attend, from the time they are born has a long-term impact on their academic chances (Tach and George, 2004: 1051).

Those individuals who are well-prepared for the transition into higher education will have a greater advantage over those who are not, and they will be able to settle down to their studies and to their new environment which can impact profoundly on their success.

Table 2.4: Prior Schooling factors that influence career choice

<b>Prior schooling</b>
-quality of teaching and learning
-preparation for the fashion programme

According to Zimmer and Toma (2000: 79), when children attend kindergarten or are cared for by someone other than their parents, this early childhood care and education establishes the foundation and has a lasting impact for their future academic success. Studies conducted by Tach and George (2004: 1051), revealed that high-quality care that is geared to their social, emotional and intellectual development in early childhood results in better language, mathematics, cognitive, social and relationships with their peers throughout their lives than in children with low-quality care. Most disadvantaged families cannot afford nor have no access to early childhood education.

Disadvantaged students receive poorer quality education and therefore tend to lack academic skills such as study skills, time management and independent study. These students are likely to struggle if their English is poor, especially if the medium of instruction is English (Stephen, 2003:45-46). He adds that poor English proficiency makes the absorption of academic or discipline-specific instruction more difficult. The challenges of higher

education for unprepared and underprepared students include adjusting to an environment that requires self-discipline and personal responsibility and to be able to think and work independently (Yorke, 2002:12).

The results of a study conducted by Bourdieu (2004: 31) indicated that working-class students are less successful because the curriculum is usually biased in favour of middle-class students and not because working class students lack intelligence. Birch and Miller (2007a: 9) believe that the curriculum is also 'extra-curricular familiar' to middleclass students, that is, they have had exposure to experiences that 'help' in better understanding issues being studied. Bufton (2003: 210) claims that working class students will be in the education system longer because they may require additional support, student development, guidance, admissions and induction.

Unpreparedness or under-preparedness for higher education will pose an adjustment problem to students, especially if the prior schooling was regimented, disciplined and highly supervised. Students will find it difficult to adjust to an environment that is characterized by independence, free time and self-discipline (Jansen, 2012: 1). Unprepared and underpreparedness will only serve to lower a student's self-esteem, delay promotion to higher grades and prevent them from graduating in the minimum time. (Giannakopoulos and Buckley, 2003: 192).

### **2.7.1 Quality of teaching and learning**

According to Huysamen (2000: 148); and Jansen (2012: 1), teaching, learning and assessment at school level tend to develop study skills and learning strategies that are worlds apart from the independent style required for higher education. Lowe and Cook (2003:53) found that even excellent students who performed well in school situations often feel under-prepared to cope with learning styles expected of a higher education student. The required study skills such as note taking, additional reading, researching skills, time-management skills, posing questions, functioning in large groups, team work and computer literacy for higher education are different to what



worked well at high school level. According to Giannakopoulos and Buckley (2003: 192), higher education academic personnel should not assume that the skills and culture of learning had been established at school and can therefore be cultivated further. These researchers maintain that a culmination of life experiences of student serves as a means of adjusting to learning in higher education, thus impacting on preparedness.

Students enter university with different life experiences that are as a result of their socio-economic, cultural and educational, thus impacting their levels of competence, knowledge, interest and maturity (Biggs and Tang 2007:11). According to Nair (2002: 152), many students may not be stimulated by the teaching methods used in higher education, and therefore the gap between the diversity of socio-economic, cultural and educational cannot be narrowed. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2001: 188) believe that if a student is motivated, committed and genuinely suited for a programme of study, no matter their socio-economic, cultural and educational background, they will succeed. They add that minimum effort is needed by students who are committed and interested in a programme and that these students usually have a clear career path and regard the contents of a programme as being important. These committed students teach themselves by means of constant reflection on what and why they are learning. Furthermore, they relate and apply content to a well-constructed knowledge base and in fact, they do not require a lecturer to facilitate most of the learning (Smythe and Halonen, 2005: 28).

Robbins, Huy, Davis, Carlstrom, Lauver and Langley (2004: 262) assert that unprepared and underprepared students struggle through higher education because of poor learning methods, poor work habits that are as a result of a lack of experiences from their socio-economic, cultural and educational experiences. Commitment to higher education is a pre-entry attribute that is vital for success. Commitment can be described as being prepared for lectures, attending all lectures, daily revision of lectures and putting an effort into their studies (Giannakopoulos and Buckley, 2003: 192). They state further that commitment to a programme of study is insufficient as study

requires a certain amount of pre-entry skills, attributes and the potential for a field of study.

The potential and commitment to a Fashion study at higher education, according to Florida (2000: 230) is the ability of the applicant to have a clear idea of what is expected of them academically, and a general knowledge of the economic, political, social, historical and psychological issues that affect fashion.

### **2.7.2. Preparation for higher education**

According to Jansen (2012: 14), schools in South Africa do not offer the same standard of education as many schools particularly those in rural and disadvantaged areas are under-resourced and have under-qualified and un-qualified teachers. Maake (2012: 1) states that unprepared and underprepared students in higher education come from high schools that do not prepare them in basic levels of computer literacy, do not offer practical laboratory experiences, and do not have the necessary infrastructural for their students to acquire experiences as preparation for higher education. He adds that if the poor schooling system has not provided the relevant and necessary life experiences to its students; the students will lack foundational competencies in literacy and numeracy. He states further that these students will also come out of the secondary school system lacking higher order cognitive competencies. The teacher/pupil ratio in most disadvantaged schools have workloads and class sizes that make it impossible for teachers to give each student attention or to encourage independent thinking. These teachers find it easier to 'spoon-feed' or teach by rote so that they can pass the examination and as a result they make the transition to higher education more difficult (Giannakopoulos and Buckley, 2003: 192).

## **2.7 FUSING CAREER DEVELOPEMENT THEORIES AND NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

The context of a life history or life stories involves the physical, geographical, temporal, historical, cultural and aesthetic settings within which experiences

take place (Lawrence and Lightfoot, 1997). These life stories are 'told' or narrated to make sense of and to understand the impact of experiences and lives. The researcher used the career life stories or narratives of the students to understand their career development process.

Central to this research is the proposition that an individual's career should be synonymous with life development. Career development involves an individual's whole life and not only occupational orientated parts of one's life (Wolfe and Kolb, 1980). The Systems Theory Framework is an integrative framework for career development that considers the Fashion students as active, participative and unique individuals who are shaped by social, environmental and historic experiences.

Career theory and narrative research when fused within the Systems Theory Framework (STF) provides a deep and comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of and permits the researcher to examine how the Fashion students construct, interpret and make sense of their experiences and career identities over time. It also permits the operationalisation of Ginzberg's (1948) theory of skills development and enjoyment that facilitates a career in Fashion. Both these theories emphasize the unpredictability of past, present and future influences, and the effects of individual, social and environmental systems that facilitate the myriad of influences on career development.

## **2.8. SUMMARY**

The STF of career development was used in this research as it accommodates the influences that are located within the context of time (past and present) and which are linked to the past influences that influenced the present of the four year Fashion design students that participated in this study. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) allows for the Fashion students' data to be coded around the themes (thematic coding) within a temporal and transformational context by considering the interrelationships of the past and their present experiences.

This framework allowed the researcher to examine the Fashion students' narrative data to analyse and make meaning of their Fashion career experiences.

Literature pertaining to the life experiences of family, skills and abilities and prior schooling that can influence, mould and shape every aspect of an individual towards the development and choice of a particular career were presented. The life experiences of the students' pre-entry attributes mentioned in this chapter will be used in the next chapter to determine which of these experiences contributed to developing characteristics and attributes that constitute potential that Fashion students should possess. The pre-entry attributes of the Fashion students will be used to guide the development of an interview protocol that is structured or standardised.

Chapter three explains the methodology employed to collect and analyze data provided by the participants in this study

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter two presented the literature and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpinned this study. This chapter presents the research methodology and outlines the research design and strategy that facilitates the discussion about career theory. This chapter explains the research process and explains the interpretative framework that grounded the research.

#### **3.2 NARRATIVE RESEARCH**

Narrative research, according to Chase (2005: 652) has no single definition and has no specific methodology but can be described as a genre of qualitative research (Cresswell, Eloff, Ferriera, Jansen, Niewenhuis, Plano Clark and van der Westhuisen, 2010: 146) that privileges lived and living experiences by comprehending experiences to make sense and give meaning to these experiences and events in a person's life through the stories that they tell (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 247).

Narrative research, according to Marshall and Rossman (1995: 86) is the process of collecting data to describe lives to actively find the voice of the participants in a particular time, place and setting. The participants narratives in the socio-economic, cultural and educational context involves the physical, geographical, temporal, historical, cultural and aesthetic setting in relation to time and space as a resource for understanding the individual and the actions of the individual with regard to a career in fashion (Lawrence and Lightfoot, 1997: 107).

This research attempted to explore the four year Fashion students' experiences based upon their oral stories and recollections about their socio-economic, educational and cultural settings to understand how their careers as Fashion designers developed. The research approach to this study was self-directed and located in a University of Technology, namely the DUT.

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

Knowledge construction is referred to as paradigms, namely: positivist, post-positivist, critical and interpretivist (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 14 and Brott, 2004: 191). Positivism is 'scientific' and assumes that truth can be derived at objectively and scientifically (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Post-positivism is a paradigm that questions the belief that the natural world is determined by human behaviour, norms and standards of social groups within society (Nieuwenhuis, 2010: 64).

Interpretivism is rooted in hermeneutics and is based on the notion that social interaction and action is unpredictable (Nieuwenhuis, 2010: 59). Interpretivism considers people to be unique individuals who are capable of making deliberate choices about their life paths with unpredictable behaviour. These interpretations are subjective and are relative to the author, interpreter, reader and teller within their natural circumstances (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Paulston and Liebman (1996: 14) claim that no one process determines the entire truth, but that 'little bits' of truth when 'put together' make-up the entire truth or story. It is classed as relativism because reality exists in peoples' minds, which varies from individual to individual in many forms (Gadamer, 1998). Methods within the interpretivist paradigm are most often interviews, observations, journals, documents, analysis of signs and/or symbols to describe and give meaning to a phenomenon from many viewpoints in order to reach consensus (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). The "hermeneutic circle" refers to the understanding of the 'entire situation' in respect of participant, researcher, content, context and the audience, that go

together to make the 'entire truth', and *vice versa*, without emphasizing dependent and independent variables (Leedy and Ormond, 2005: 134).

As the sample contained unique individuals who have had experiences that guided their development and personalities, the interpretivist paradigm was considered appropriate for this study. The participants provided their stories in episodes which the researcher arranged in chronological order, to provide an entire life story with the intention of giving meaning to their everyday lives and interactions (Stake, 2005: 445). The participants' career life stories were used to go deeper into issues of interest, to examine their experiences in their natural settings of family background, skills and abilities and prior schooling by using qualitative means (Berger and Luckman, 1979: 76).

The researcher acknowledges that the participants were not representative of the demographics of the diploma graduate output but she selected all the students that agreed to participate in her study. Consequently, thirteen female and two, male participants were selected; this sample consisted of four Black females, one Black male (indigenous South African), 1 Coloured female (mixed race), six White females, one White male (Caucasian) and two Indian females (South African of Indian descent). According to Goodson (2001:131), Bron and West (2000: 162) and Tedder (2007: 27), ethnic diversity is closely linked to academic achievement, values and beliefs, and is therefore valuable in learning about the participants experiences in relation to their socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds. The difference in the backgrounds of students is of particular importance in the South African situation, as socio-economic, cultural and educational has a direct link to ethnicity (Giannakopoulos and Buckley, 2003: 192).

The Interactional Analysis Approach allowed the researcher to relate the participant's experiences in particular socio-economic, cultural and educational settings such as family events, community situations and institutional events (in school, church, social clubs) where the researcher and the participant jointly participated in conversation. The researcher heeded the advice of Mishler (1995: 89), who suggested that the themes and structure of

the career life histories if familiar to the researcher, allows for the researcher to “put him/herself in the other participant’s shoes”, thereby identifying with and participating in the story-telling. Stories of personal experiences were sometimes exchanged, thus interaction took place (Derrida, 2982: 125). An interactional approach was useful to the researcher in that it allowed for the development of a relationship with the participants irrespective of their socio-economic, cultural and educational settings.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design is the planned action by which the research problem relates the concept to practice of empirical research (Cresswell, 1998). The design of the research is meant to produce the necessary information within the limitations imposed on the researcher and determines whether the research activity is exploratory, explanatory or descriptive (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009: 139).

Exploratory research seeks new insights, and questions and assesses the phenomena and/or events (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002: 182). It requires a descriptive account of the relationship and effects of the variables, while descriptive research provides accounts of events, actions and experiences of the participants (Robson, 2002: 59). This descriptive study provided an account of and insight into the lives of students’ thereby providing their profiles and accounts of the processes of developing identity, choices and decisions for a career in Fashion.

### **3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH AND STRATEGY**

According to Daiute and Lightfoot (2004), theory can be generated and verified by deductive or inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning involves developing a hypothesis based on existing theory to generate a research strategy for testing. Inductive reasoning is concerned with making



generalizations about specific situations in respect of the research topic and questions, and is thus interpretative (Josselson, 1982).

The research approach is the 'paradigm' or a basic set of beliefs and perceptions that guide action. Paradigms consist of four terms, namely: epistemology as the method of reasoning; ontology concerned with the nature of being; methodology which is the process of providing a logical sequence with a beginning, middle and an end; and axiology which is concerned with ethics and values (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 245). These four components determine the research questions, methods, analysis and thus the validity of the research (Maree, 2010: 114). This study adopted a critical and constructivist ontology which set out to understand experiences through the career life stories of the students (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 245); a critical hermeneutic standpoint which gathered data in small amounts and put this data together to provide the entire story (Henn, Weinstein and Fouad, 2009: 14). The critical interpretative epistemology employed a narrative research strategy that set out to understand the experiences of the students through their accounts by collecting data through episodic interviewing techniques (Merriam, 2009: 3). This study observed the axiology by taking into consideration the use of pseudonyms to conceal the identities of the participants and by using the experiences of the researcher in telling the story. According to Alheit and Dausien (2002: 17) the researcher's sense of career identity and the truth of the career experiences is useful in the telling of the story.

### **3.5.1 Qualitative research**

Research is divided into two categories, namely: quantitative and qualitative (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 76). Quantitative research is statistically or numerically valued and presented, while qualitative research aims to provide a contextual understanding of social phenomena. This study used the qualitative approach, by conducting personal interviews with participants to learn about the experiences that guided their career paths. Qualitative research has five methodology types, namely: biography; phenomenology;

grounded theory; ethnography; and case studies (Cresswell *et al.*, 2010: 146). This study employed the case study method.

According to Merriam (1998) and Yin (1984: 23) a case study is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which describe and explain the topic of interest. In this study each student provided an account of their lives which described their experiences from a Fashion perspective. This case study was a linear investigative case study (Merriam, 2009) working within one tertiary education institution to detail factors that enhanced students' career selection.

### **3.5.2 Episodic Interviewing**

Episodic interviews were conducted due to the assumption that the experiences of individuals are stored, and that the experiences are processed as knowledge for career development (Flick, 2000).

Episodic interviews were conducted to examine particular aspects of the participants' lives, that is, their career experiences, which are considered to be an appropriate approach to represent social constructs (Flick, 2009: 87). The episodic interview combines life history or personal interviews to facilitate comprehensive descriptions. Using semi structured interviews involves stimulus-response sequences (Flick, 2009: 87) that are contextually grounded by the researcher and the participant to give meaning to the questions and answers (Mishler, 1986). By using the episodic technique, the researcher was able to intervene and direct the interview through a series of key questions that prompted the participant to recount and define situations.

Although episodic interviews have their limitations, it is useful in providing an understanding of the world from the "subject's point of view" of past experiences and in disclosing future intentions (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 97 and Kvale, 1996: 1). Episodic knowledge is organised by time and place, and is described by its perceptual characteristics, that is, it is individually designed to collect data (Flick, 2000). This study used the

inductive interview approach, which was concerned with making generalizations about the specific situations that the participant's or cases have had in their development that resulted their identity, decision, choice and personality for a fashion career (Henn, Weinstein and Fouad, 2009: 14).

The interview schedule contained questions that would provide relevant answers (*Appendices 3C, 3D and 3E*). Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (2004) advised that interview schedules that are semi-structured be used to highlight significant actions, decisions and incidents of relevance to this study, to ensure uniformity. The interview enables the researcher to explore, probe, interrogate the participant and it served as a checklist to facilitate and to provide a systematic and comprehensive guide for the research process (Cresswell *et al.*, 2010: 203).

Interviews are considered to be time consuming, costly, difficult to get volunteers and are capable of leaving out information that is of significance to the story (Merriam, 2003: 19). Hammersley (2006: 241) and Cole and Knowles (2000: 11) claim that it is common for personal interviews to encourage bias, can provide too little or too much data which can present problems for the researcher. To avoid using unnecessary data, the researcher used only that which was relevant to this study and that which answered the research questions.

### **3.5 SOURCING PARTICIPANTS**

The complete group or special population elements or groups of people, items or units being investigated are referred to as the target population (Angel, 2009: 266). The target population in this study was the Fashion degree students who had completed the degree between 2009 and 2012. This population was purposively chosen because they went through the interview selection process and were selected and admitted to the undergraduate Fashion programme. These students had successfully completed the undergraduate programme in the minimum time allocation and

chose to continue to study at degree level. Therefore it can be assumed that these students or the population were ideal candidates, had the right qualities and were best suited to the Fashion programme and would be able to answer the research questions. The total population of graduates from 2009 to 2012 was 31 students.

The process of choosing a sample known as sampling (Sharma, 2011b: 203) involves selecting a sufficient number of cases from the target population; from which to draw conclusions about the whole population. The sampling process is also to determine population, sampling frame, sampling method, sample size and sample selection (Stake, 2005: 445).

Richmond (2000: 38) and Connelly and Clandinin (2000: 9) advised that fifteen (15) participants are sufficient and is the minimum number for the sample that can be used in narrative research as it requires many hours of interviewing over many months; transcribing copious numbers of interviews until all the information had been obtained. The 31 Fashion degree students were approached by the researcher *via* emails and telephone calls, whereby 18 participants were recruited. A focus group was conducted to explain the study. Within a month of the commencement of the research, two participants resigned due to work commitments. Another participant resigned after three months when full-time employment had been gained. A total of 15 students made up the sample, representing all Fashion students who have successfully completed the four-year degree, thus making sample selection purposive to reveal the range and scope of their narratives (Lincoln and Cannella, 2004: 7).

The sampling frame is the source material used to obtain data, which in this case were the Fashion degree students at the DUT. The reason for using a sampling frame is to obtain an unbiased representation of the target population (Iacobucci, 2005: 285). Research can employ two methods, namely, probability or non-probability sampling (Stake, 2005: 451). In the case of probability sampling, each population element has a known zero chance of being selected to be a part of the study; and non-probability

sampling has no way of estimating which element of the population will be included in the sample. This study used purposively sampling because specific types of people were used to generate data that only they would be able to provide, within the set criteria (Angel, 2009: 266). The sample drawn for this study had to be the Fashion degree students of the DUT.

### 3.6 PREPARATION FOR EPISODIC INTERVIEWS

Data collection for career life history research requires pre-planning so that crucial steps for data collection are not overlooked (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 69). Figure 3.1 below outlines the preparatory steps that were taken to enable the data collection process to begin.

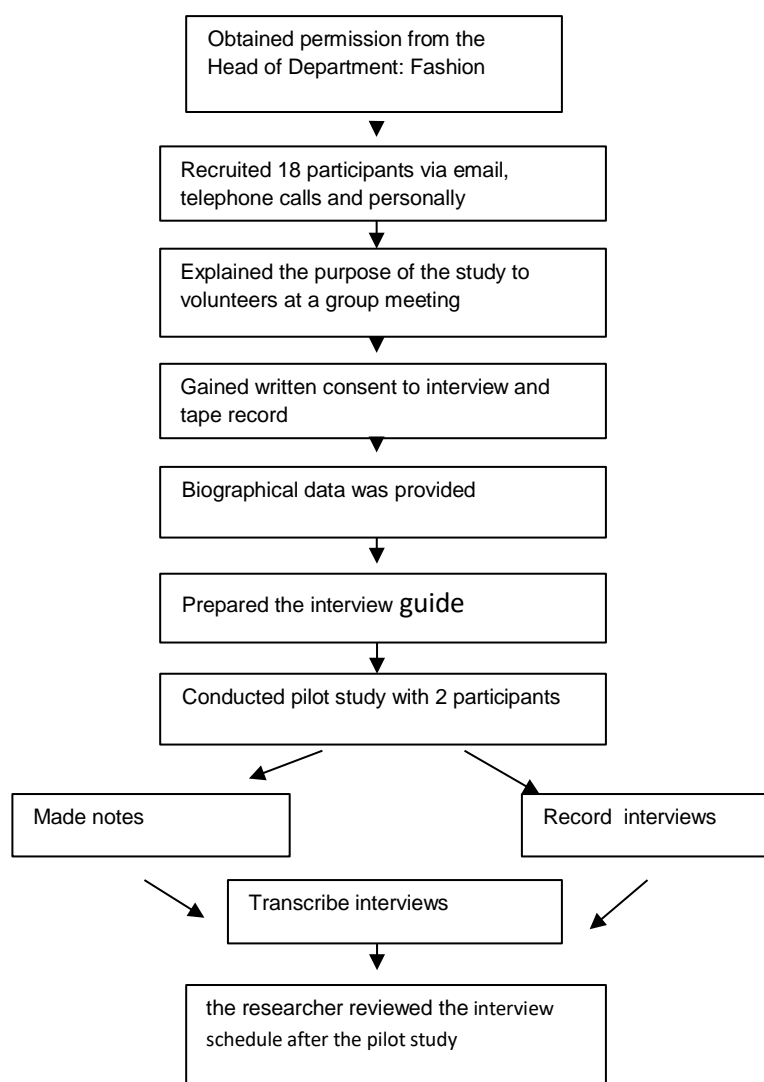


Figure 3.1: Flow chart for the data collection process

The initial focus group met on Saturday, May 1, 2010 at the researcher's residence at 12h30. This meeting served as an 'ice-breaker' in that the students got to feel comfortable with the researcher in a context other than the university. Lunch was provided and the study was outlined and explained, giving an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity on the part of the researcher. The consensus was that interviews should take place on Saturdays in two sessions, at 11h30 and 16h00 for convenience. It was mutually agreed that the date would be changed to the preceding day, a Friday if either the participant or the researcher was unable to keep the Saturday appointment. The students also expressed approval of once a month appointments as reasonable and not too intrusive or demanding on their time. They also agreed to exchange appointments with each other when the need arose. The researcher informed the participants that they would be provided with refreshments at subsequent interviews.

The researcher issued each participant with a copy of the time-table (*Appendix 3B*) on 3 May 2010 *via* e-mail and hand-delivered to those who did not have access to email facilities. Transport issues were discussed with six participants who informed the researcher of transport difficulties in getting to the interview site. The researcher arranged to provide transport for these participants. The participants chose their own aliases. The participants pledged their time and commitment to the study over the next twelve-month period and signed an *informed consent form* to ensure that they were willing participants (Yin, 2003: 14) (*Appendix 3A*). A time-table was negotiated with the participants for appointments for interviews, and a commitment to notify the each other of changes to appointments were agreed upon.

Semi-structured in-depth, episodic interviews (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 1) were conducted by the researcher to collect data over a twelve-month period. The key focus of these interviews was on gaining multiple perspectives in understanding the career paths of the four year degree Fashion students, which Richmond (2000: 35) claims is central to the development of a social and personal identity, and therefore has much to do with education. The

initial interviews required the recall of life experiences in a broad sense. Subsequent interviews were conducted to allow for probing and clarification, with attention to any new recall. A set of predetermined questions were incrementally answered over the next twelve months until the entire 'picture' and 'saturation' was achieved (Yin, 2003: 14) and to provide the themes for Section B to E of the interview protocol.

### **3.6.1. interview schedule**

According to Badderley and Singer (2007: 182), conducting structure-free interviews are not possible, therefore the interviews for this study had guidelines of pre-determined topics and sample questions (*Appendix C*) to help question in a manner that would maximize participant responses (Schutze, 1992: 53) (*Appendices C, D and E*). The initial interviews were approximately 3 to 4 hours in duration with subsequent shorter interviews from May 2011 to February 2013 (*Appendix D and E*) being conducted until saturation was reached.

One of the core activities in the research process is the data collection procedure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009: 185). Personal interviews (Yin, 2003: 14) describe this collection instrument as one that takes place over a number of months until saturation point is reached, that is, when all the data has been attained.

## **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

The data collection included the following three interview phases as recommended by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (2004). The three episodic interview phases were conducted as follows:-

*Phase 1: casual conversation of 3 hours*

*Phase 2: exploring themes*

*Phase 3: clarifying and verifying issues.*

### **3.7.1 Phase 1: Casual conversation**

The first phase of the data collection for this study involved casual conversations lasting approximately three hours with each of the initial eighteen participants. It consisted of two or more sections that sought data of a general nature to provide an overview of the events and experiences of these students (see appendix C) which allowed the researcher to form a relationship with them and for spontaneous answers on the part of the participants. The first interview phase, which Lieblich and Josselson (1997) refer to as “detail-oriented probing”, enabled the researcher to understand “who, where, when and what” about the incidents, experiences and critical moments in the participants lives without asking “why” as the reasons for particular behaviours were not required (McAdams, 1993).

The researcher showed concern, care, empathy and respect, without patronising the interviewee. A broad outline of the career life stories were related to the researcher. The first interview was followed by other subsequent interviews until the outline of the career life histories were sufficiently covered.

### **3.7.2 Phase 2: Exploring themes**

The second phase had two purposes: to interrogate topics that were previously discussed in earlier interviews, and for themes to be created (see *Appendix C and D*). This phase involved “questions” or “probes” of the topics, biographical details and events in “sequences, chronology, stories or processes” to explain and elaborate on previous data (Muchmore, 2001: 101). Following Muchmore’s suggestion, the researcher started questions with “tell me about the time when.....” in reference to what had been discussed before.

The researcher made up the second phase by conducting interviews that clarified and confirmed data that was supplied previously. As Patton (2002:



114) noted, the second phase of the interviews served to elaborate on data and for the researcher to gain a “better understanding” of experiences. Four participants required two additional interviews for the researcher to obtain richer accounts.

### **3.7.3 Phase 3: Clarifying and verifying issues**

The third phase of interviews sessions was carried out in as many stages as was necessary by using a general interview guided approach that intended gaining information about issues that were discussed in previously. This phase of the interview process facilitated the return to previous accounts for elaboration and clarification, which meant going backwards and forwards in order to ascertain reliability of the data and for the participant to convey meaning at different levels. Lieblich and Josselson (1997); and Bauer and Gaskell (1999: 142) suggested pin-pointing major emerging themes in relation to the past, present and future context. Lastly, the participants were given the opportunity to read the transcripts of the interviews to verify and amend, where necessary, to eliminate any misrepresentations by the researcher.

The five categories of the interview questions were as follows:

**Section A:** biographical details of the participants.

**Section B:** family backgrounds in terms of socio-economic status, beliefs and values and culture.

**Section C:** the skills and abilities that the participants possessed, in terms of their interests, language and those attained from peers and/or role models.

**Section D:** represented the data that explained the participant’s prior schooling, in respect of the quality and type of teaching and learning and the extramural activities of the participants.

**Section E:** their personality types from self-evaluations, how they think their friends and a stranger would describe them - this information was categorised as per Holland (1996).

All sections of the data collection process were divided into the following two age groups as suggested by Ginzberg, in Birch and Miller (2007b: 18):

0 to 11 years old which represented the past and when the individual began to develop a career identity; and 11 to 17 years old which represented the present and when an individual usually makes career decisions and choices. For the purpose of this study, the third period suggested by Birch and Miller (2007b), that is the period from 17 years onwards was not used because this study was concerned with the individual up to the time that they applied for the Fashion programme at the DUT. Birch and Miller (2007b: 18) explain the period 17 years and onwards as the period when the individual either acquires the necessary education and training to pursue a particular career or gains employment in the field that they believe best suits them.

The thematic approach developed themes that the participants had in common and the structural approach was used to separate the data by the time-lines of birth to eleven years old; from eleven to seventeen and from seventeen years onwards as recommended in Ginzberg's Career Development theory (Birch and Miller, 2007b: 18). These three stages are episodic and represented particular times that linked to the impacts of family background, skills and abilities and prior schooling. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the three dimensional narrative space to organise the data for analysis while Mishler (2002: 19) uses the past, present and future to separate the data for analysis. The researcher combined all three methods mentioned above in order to organise events and people into a meaningful whole and to connect and see the consequences of actions, incidents and people over time.

### **3.7.4 Recording data**

According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000: 69), recording data enables the researcher to totally engage in the interview process. The researcher had the opportunity to make notes where necessary, but refrained from making extensive notes that would interrupt the 'flow' of information. The audio recordings made it possible for the researcher to listen to the recordings as many times as was necessary to transcribe the interviews verbatim. Kvale (1996: 160) asserts that audio-taping is incapable of capturing the visual aspects such as the setting and expressions of the participant. The limitations of the interviews were making deductions from the experiences of the students rather than observing behaviour (Hammersley, 2006: 241). As this research was only concerned with the context of the story or "what was said", and not with "how it was said" the audio-taping was adequate in providing rich accounts of the lives of the degree students. The researcher prepared for the data collection process by compiling a data collection plan.

## **3. 8 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher extracted the relevant data that provided rich accounts of the participants' lives. After transcribing the interviews, the researcher began identifying and 'teasing' out the relevant themes by the process of induction. The inductive approach facilitated the development of themes and codes from the narrative accounts by using categorical-content theory that was developed by Lieblich *et al.* (1998); and Mishler (2000: 142). The three-dimensional narrative space method of categorical-content perspective enabled the researcher to organise the data into categories of ages 0 to 11 and 11 to 17.

The interpretative/hermeneutic philosophy of analysing and processing data involved providing meanings, explanations and understandings of experiences qualitatively. Qualitative data, according to Parker (2005) can be analysed to emphasise the description, explanation and/or interpretation. The

data were described to create an account of the life of the participant, and entailed and explained what the meant (Rietchie and Lewis, 2003: 79). According to Wolcott (1994: 348), data interpretation becomes personal, partial, dynamic and reliant on the researchers' 'sixth-sense,' The career life histories of the participants required close and constant examination of the transcripts against the researcher's interpretation to process, organise and divide the data into manageable units and in themes that were relevant to the aims of the study (Janesick, 2000: 382).

### **3.8.1 Analysing Episodic Interviews**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, 2006); and Flick (2000, 2009) suggest the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space as an appropriate approach for examining episodic interviews. Thematic coding is applied as a two-stage procedure: firstly, interpreting the single case and producing a description for each case; and, secondly, cross-checking the developed categories and thematic domains linked to the single cases for comparative purposes (Flick, 2009). The theoretical background of thematic coding is the diversity of social worlds as assumed in the concept of social representations, that is, a constructivist/interpretive approach for understanding individual experience (Flick, 2000, 2009). Lieblich *et al.* (1998) term holistic-content as the approach that is used to comprehend the meaning of an individual's story (Mensinga, 2009; Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). The holistic-content analysis of field texts such as interview transcripts, necessitates a set of steps based on the central feature of restorying a story from the original raw data (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). The process of re-storying includes reading the transcript, analysing this story to understand the living experiences, and then retelling the story. This is similar to Hernadi's (1987) hermeneutic triad of explication, explanation and exploration.

Re-storying is the process of gathering stories, analysing them for their key elements (e.g., time, place, plot and scene), and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence. In the re-storying of the participants' story and the telling of the themes, the narrative researcher includes rich

detail about the setting or context of the participant's experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Webster and Mertova, 2007).

The metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is an approach for retelling or re-storying field texts (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) based this approach on their own work with narrative inquiry and grounded in a review of others for analysing narrative inquiry (e.g. Lieblich and Josselson, 2001); Polkinghorne, 1988), and identified three commonalities of narrative inquiry such as time, place and social constructs (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007). The main concerns are the events and experiences in a person's narrative according to the timeframe in which they occurred (time), the significant settings in which they happened (place) and the personal and social resources utilised during these events and experiences (sociality).

### **3.8.2 Narrative discourse analysis**

This study used the narrative discourse analysis of the participants' career life-histories which concerned itself with the story that the participants personally experienced. The story was organised and developed by the researcher to provide 'a beginning, middle and an end'. The researcher arranged the data in "sequence, chronology, stories" (Mishler, 2000: 144). The researcher was required to organise the data in sequential order by age, 0 to 11 and 11 to 17 years old to provide the life story of each participant. Meaning was derived from formal and structural organisation according to the 'narrative storyline' or 'thread' in what the researcher considered as 'major themes' with simultaneous consideration given to the past, present and future to represent a spatial context of the narrative account (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998: 65).

Themes were provided by the participant during the course of the interviews and were organized with respect to particular periods of the participant's life regarding the experiences and connections to historical, social or

biographical strands, experiences and events that related to fashion as a career. The relevant data were extracted from the transcripts to gain an understanding and to answer the research questions. The 'plot' of the study emerged from several readings of the text, until conclusions could be drawn.

### **3.8.3 Story map**

Mishler (2000: 90) and Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998: 65-66) recommend using a 'story map' to analyse the transcripts. This 'story-map' served as a 'compass' to analyse and to make connections of the incidents and events of the career paths of the four-year degree Fashion students' accounts of their life experiences. This process of constructive, creative and considered analysis of the narratives enabled an organized, structure that focused on 'core issues' namely, fashion identity development, careers choice, decision and the suitability to the Fashion programme as a story map.

A table (Table 3.2 below) which was adapted from Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002: 340) was used as a story map in the three dimensional analysis process for each participant's data. The individual system of analysis included gender, age, race, values, ability, skills and knowledge and referred to the social structure through which the individual interacted with other systems such as family, peers, community, educational and institutions. The table below represented the data analysis of individual participants.

#### **Table 3.1: Represented the analysis of each participants**

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME-IN: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME-OUT: \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL IN MINS: \_\_\_\_\_



### Table 3.3: Cross-referencing of data

Source: developed by author

### 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

74



year degree Fashion students to invite participation. A focus group discussion was attended by twenty-two past and current Fashion students to explain the study and recruit participants. Four students declined to take part in this study after being informed that the interviews would take place over many months and that they would be audio-taped and transcribed verbatim (Pieterse and Maree, 2010: 179).

### **3.10 SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY**

When the career life histories of the participants were recorded, the researcher used the many personal interviews and accounts of specific incidents to verify the data. The participants had the opportunity to read and edit the final transcript to verify the data so that the story was related from their perspective. The researcher did this to remain objective and yet had to remain 'connected' to the study in an effort to build on the relationship that had been established with the participant, that is, to be subjective (Nieuwenhuis, 2010: 87).

Kathard (2003: 99) believes that the saying "trust in the words of the text" is of value as the results will impact and influence the type of audience and the number of fields to which this study can appeal and apply. This study argues that the knowledge of designers and educationalists had enabled the participants and the audience to make 'educated' judgements of the truth by considering the researchers' didactical qualifications and experiences in higher education and the practical experiences gained in the fashion industry.

Creswell (2003: 200) asserts that in qualitative research the researcher is considered to be the primary data collection instrument. Therefore, it is necessary for the values, assumptions and biases of the researcher to be revealed in the initial stage of the study. As a lecturer in the department of Fashion, the researcher had knowledge of and was sensitive to the experiences and challenges of the four-year degree students in this study. Although the researcher made every effort to be objective, a certain amount of

subjectivity would have 'crept in' during the course of understanding and interpreting the data. Data collection for this study considered the natural setting in which the participants navigated their career development with due consideration to subjectivity and objectivity.

### **3.11 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND GENERALISABILITY**

As this study belonged to the life history genre of research, it did not aim to produce a standard procedure that developed 'generalisable laws' (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:101). It achieved validity by conducting a series of interviews of a personal nature that were able to get obtain many versions of the same story from a single participant (Pieterse and Maree, 2010: 217). This study was concerned with revealing the meaning and relevance to enable them to be applied to other similar contexts and situations. The data from the rich and in-depth career life stories with explicit criteria of fashion life experiences that allowed the audience a better understanding of the researcher's values and interests (Finlay and Gough, 2008).

'Formalised rigour' according to Cole and Knowles (2000) can be achieved by using four categories, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. They explain these four categories as one that replaces internal validity with credibility by focusing on the findings that were relevant or had meaning to the participants. The research thus becomes transferable by depicting the setting and enabling it to be applied to other similar settings; generalisable because it can be externally validated (Lincoln and Guba, 2004b: 4) by graduates of the Fashion programme at DUT; and dependable because the data, method and decisions can be audited; and it is objective because the researcher reflected on the methodology self-critically.

### **3.12 SUMMARY**

This chapter explained the data collection and data analysis methodology employed in this study. It outlined the methodology to include important considerations such as the target population, sample techniques, instrument, data collection, analysis and ethics that governed this study. This chapter also set the parameters of the limitations and for maintaining validity and reliability, while giving consideration to the ethics of life history research.

In the next chapter, an analysis and interpretation of the findings are made against the themes that were identified.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Data from the narrative interviews were gathered from 15 cases, namely the Fashion students at the DUT to find out about their career experiences. As the study examined particular aspects of the Fashion students' lives, that is, their career identity, decisions and choice, the episodic interview which is a narrative technique, was deemed appropriate.

The narratives were analysed, adhering to processes involved in episodic data analysis. Particular attention was paid to the structural influences noted by the participants when analysing their narratives according to the three dimensions of the narrative inquiry space, namely, time, place and sociality (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). A summary was provided of the structural processes that shaped the participant's Fashion career development encapsulated the interaction between the participants Fashion career outcome. As the narratives of their Fashion career experiences yielded a lot of useable data, responses sometimes overlapped, and in order to present data in a consolidated manner, the findings were organised around themes. Themes refer to the patterns in the data that reveal an issues or issues of particular interest (King and Horrocks, 2010: 149) and the aims and objectives of this study.

Extracts from the participants' narratives are presented below to describe the impact of the structural influences on their career development. These structural influences are rendered according to the importance placed by the participants on the particular factor. This chapter presents the findings with respect to themes that emerged from the Fashion students' narratives to highlight the pertinent issues. The themes were categorised under the

research objectives in terms of fashion career: identity development; decision; choice; and personality.

Analysis of the data were thus clustered around the research objectives which were to:

- identify the life experiences that contributed to the participant's Fashion identity;
- identify the life experiences that contributed to the participants' decision to pursue Fashion as a career;
- determine what life experiences contributed to the participants' choosing Fashion as a career; and to
- find out what personality types are best suited for admission to the Fashion programme.

The data generated from the interviews are presented thematically using verbatim quotations in order to ensure that the participants' voices and not that of the researcher are heard. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the students.

## **4.2 DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.2.1 Biographical data**

Biographical information was assessed in order to enhance the understanding of the contextual environment of the participants. Information about gender, race, location and age were collected. Table 4.1 summarises the bio-data of the participants. Each category is discussed separately in this section.

Table 4.1: Biographical data

Participant	Gender	Race	Age	Location		Grade 12 results
				0-11	11-17	
1. June	Female	White	21	URBAN	URBAN	ME
2. Scarlet	Female	White	22	URBAN	URBAN	SC
3. Cerise	Female	Coloured	22	URBAN	URBAN	ME
4. John	Male	White	23	URBAN	URBAN	SC
5. Eve	Female	White	22	RURAL	URBAN	ME
6. Sharon	Female	Black	23	RURAL	URBAN	ME
7. Judi	Female	Black	24	RURAL	RURAL	SC
8. Zara	Female	Indian	22	URBAN	URBAN	SC
9. Margie	Female	White	21	URBAN	URBAN	SC
10. Tom	Male	Black	24	URBAN	URBAN	SC
11. May	Female	Indian	21	RURAL	URBAN	ME
12. Penny	Female	White	22	URBAN	URBAN	SC
13. Pamela	Female	Black	22	RURAL	RURAL	ME
14. Annette	Female	White	22	URBAN	URBAN	ME
15. Trudi	Female	Black	36	RURAL	RURAL	SC

SC=Senior Certificate ME= matriculation Exemption

#### 4.1.1.1 Gender

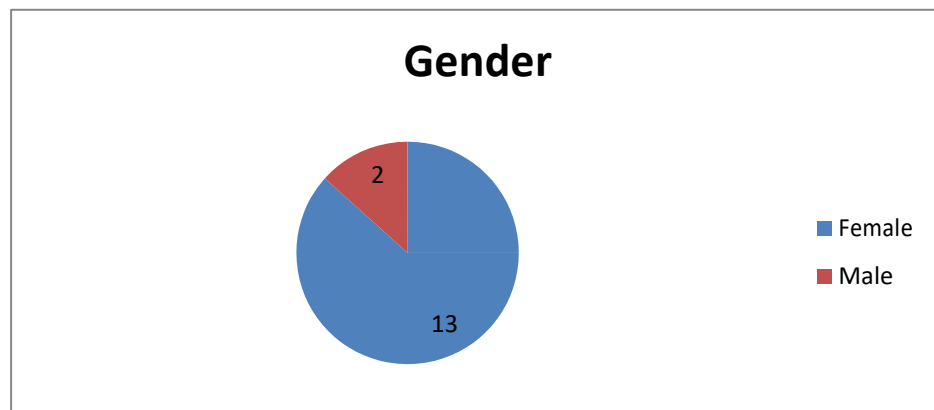


Figure 4.2: Gender demographic

Figure 4A, shows that the majority of the participants, 13 out of 15 (87%) were female and 2 (13%) were male.

Gender is pivotal in the two stories of the male participants as they were mocked and ridiculed by members of their communities for showing an interest in fashion. Oldfield (2005: 106) explains that “if you were not female, it was a given that all male Fashion students were gay.” Tinto (1993) and Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin (2004: 121) concur that certain careers are considered to be gender stereotyped, as is the case with Fashion.

#### 4.2.1.2 Race

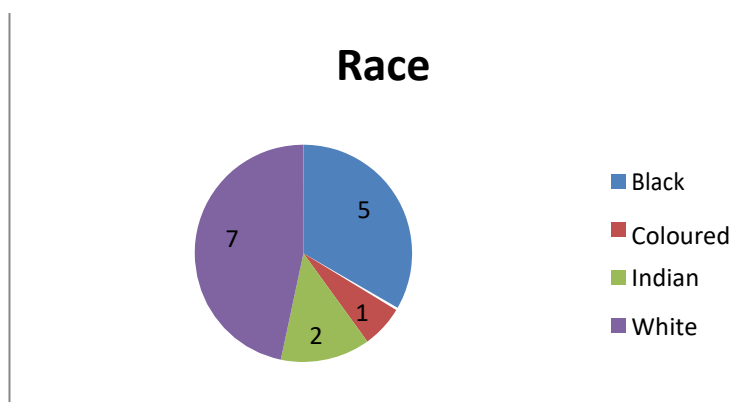


Figure 4.3: Race demographic

Figure 4B, indicates that the majority of the participants, that is, 7 out of 15 (47%) were White. 5 (34%) were Black; 2 (13%) were Indian; and 1 (6%) was Coloured. All were born in South Africa.

The race composition of the participants are presented because Tinto (1993); Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin (2006: 121); and Eiselen and Geyser (2004: 120) agree that Blacks, Coloureds and Indians are likely to be the more socio-economically, culturally and educationally disadvantaged races in South Africa. The majority of the White, Coloured and Indian participants in this study were advantaged socio-economically by virtue of their living conditions, parents' occupations, parents' income, family resources, geographical location and prior education. The majority of the Black participants were disadvantaged socio-economically, and educationally, especially in the first 11 years of their lives. Eiselen and Geyser (2004: 120) maintain that Blacks are the most disadvantaged of the all the race groups in South Africa as they were socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged. The Black participants' parents' occupations were low-income occupations and their narratives revealed that they, lived in over-crowded conditions, had very few resources in the first 11 years, lived in rural areas; and attended schools where the classrooms were over-crowded and where English was not their first language.

#### 4.2.1.3 Age

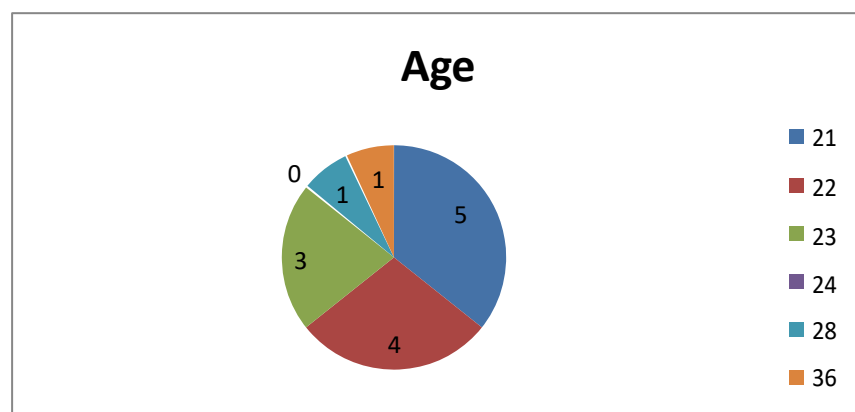


Figure 4C: Age demographic



Figure 4.4 indicates that the participants spanned a range of ages as follows: 7 were 22; 3 were 21; 2 were 23; 2 were 24; and 1 was 36 years old. The age range of the majority of the participants, namely: 21-24 years old implies that these participants enrolled as traditional students and the 36 year old participant was a mature student. The average age of the participants was 22 years. The majority of the students completed secondary school between the ages of 17 and 19 years old and completed the DUT undergraduate programme between the ages 21 and 23.

According to the narratives of the participants, the reason for being older than the average 22 years were as follows, they had: taken a 'gap' year; suspended their studies to either travel abroad or to take the time to decide on a career; enrolled in programmes of study under duress because it was what they parents wanted them to study or they had been working. In the case of the mature student (Trudi), she said that she had qualified a programme of study that was in the science field and had worked in that field for a number of years before she plucked up the courage to pursue her dream career which is Fashion.

#### 4.2.1.4 Geographical location

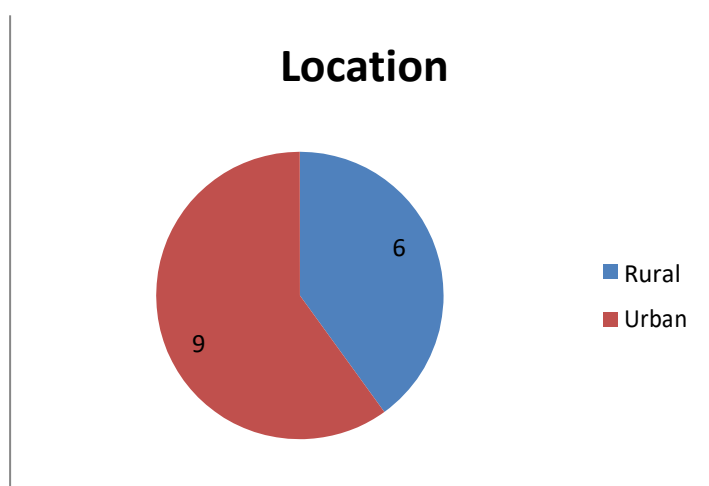


Figure 4.5: Geographical Location

Six participants came from rural areas (one White, one Indian and four Black), and nine from urban areas (six White, one Indian, one Coloured and one Black) as indicated in Figure 4D.

This finding is in keeping with the demographic trend in South Africa where rural children are mainly Black and where two were particularly underprivileged socio-economically educationally and culturally disadvantaged in the first 5 years of their lives (Van der Berg, 2006: 7).

#### 4.1.1.5 Demographic distribution of languages used

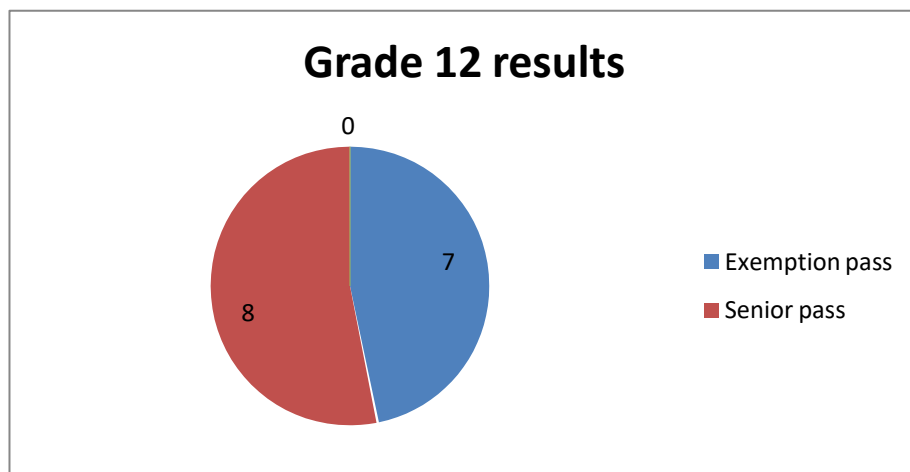
Participant	Medium of instruction in high school	Home language
1. June	English	English
2. Scarlet	English and Afrikaans	English and Afrikaans
3. Cerise	English	English
4. John	English	English
5. Eve	Afrikaans	English and Afrikaans
6. Sharon	isiZulu	isiZulu
7. Judi	isiZulu	isiZulu
8. Zara	English	English
9. Margie	Afrikaans	English and Afrikaans
10. Tom	isiZulu	isiZulu
11. May	English	English and Hindi
12. Penny	English	English and Afrikaans
13. Pamela	English and isiZulu	isiZulu
14. Annette	English	English
15. Trudi	isiXhosa	isiXhosa

Table 4.2: Language distribution of the participants

The high school medium of instruction and home languages of the participants were represented by 5 languages; namely English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa and Hindi. Seven participants received instruction in high schools in English, two in Afrikaans, three in isiZulu, one in isiXhosa and the remaining two participants were instructed in English and Afrikaans and English and isiZulu, respectively.

Regarding the home language of the participants, five participants only spoke English, four spoke English and Afrikaans, one spoke English and Hindi, four spoke isiZulu and one participant spoke isiXhosa. Four of the 15 participants had little or no opportunity to speak English prior to enrolling in the Fashion programme.

#### 4.1.1.6 Grade 12 school results



**Figure 4 E: Grade 12 result demographic**

As indicated in Figure 4E, seven participants (all females - three White, two Black, one Indian and one Coloured female) achieved matriculation exemption passes while eight participants (three White females, the one White male, two Black females, one Black male and one Indian female) achieved a senior pass in the Grade 12 examinations.

It would seem that this study contradicts the study conducted by Eiselen and Geyser (2004: 120) which states that the overall Grade 12 achievement of matriculation exemption (ME) contributes to the profile of a successful student and serves as a means of predicting potential for higher education.

## 4.2 OBJECTIVE ONE: FASHION CAREER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Table 4.3 indicates the time, place and people influential in the development of a Fashion identity of the participants.

	TEMPORALITY				PLACE	SOCIALITY	
NAME	Past 0-11	Past 11-17	Present	Future		Defining episodes	Structural influences
1. June	TV, magazines , film Roll play, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping	Accumalating skills		Home school	praise enjoyment grades in favourite subjects	Roll play  Cultural capital
2. Scarlet	TV, Role play, drawing, choosing and coordinating own clothes, sewing shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		14	Home school	praise Enjoyment Necessity	Roll play  Cultural capital
3. Cerise	TV, Roll play, choosing and coordinating own clothes Sewing Shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		12	Home	Sewing skills, designing for friends and family	Roll play  Cultural capital

4.John	TV, Roll play, drawing, coordinating clothes for self and family	TV, drawing, choosing and coordinating clothes		14	School	Drawing skills, giving fashion advice, designing for friends	Roll play
5.Eve	TV, film Roll play, drawing, choosing and coordinating own clothes, sewing shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping		12	Home school	Drawing skills, designing for friends	Roll play Cultural capital
6.Sharon	Roll play, coordinating clothes	TV, choosing and coordinating clothes, sewing		15	Home	Sewing skills, selling clothing	Roll play
7.Judi	magazines , Roll play, Shopping, coordinating own clothes	TV, drawing, choosing and coordinating clothes, sewing		16	Home community	Drawing skills	Roll play
8.Zara	TV, magazines , Roll play, drawing, choosing and	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping , sewing		12	Home	Sewing skills	Roll play Cultural capital

	coordinating own clothes  shopping						
9. Margie	TV, magazines , film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing  and  coordinating own clothes  shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping , sewing		12	Home school	Drawing skills	Roll play  Cultural capital
10. Tom	Working in  a small  clothing  enterprice	TV, film, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		16	Home	Sewing skills	Roll play
11. May	TV, magazines , film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing and coordinating own clothes  shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping , sewing		14	Home	Sewing skills	Roll play  Cultural capital
12. Penny	TV, magazines , film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing and	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping ,		13	Home school	Drawing skills	Roll play  Cultural capital

	coordinating own clothes  shopping	sewing					
13.Pamela	Roll play	TV, coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		14	Home	Sewing skills	Roll play
14.Annette	TV, magazines , film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing and coordinating own clothes  shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		12	Home school	Drawing skills and sewing skills	Roll play  Cultural capital
15.Trudi	Roll play	TV, coordinating own clothes, shopping, sewing		26	home	Sewing skills	Roll play

**Table 4.3: Fashion career identity development**

#### **4.2.1 Theme one: Role play/games**

Table 4.3 indicates that role play was vital as a Fashion career influence in the first eight years of the participants' lives, 13 female participants played 'dress-up'; One male participant (John) dressed his younger brother for school daily; and 1 participant (Tom) helped his mother and grandmother in a small informal dressmaking business. The anecdotes of 11 participants indicated that drawing, choosing their own clothes and coordinating their outfits, watching television and shopping for clothes, occupied importance in their career identity development. Thirteen participants indicated the home as the place and their mothers or grandmothers as the people who were influential in developing their Fashion identity. Six of these 13 participants

attributed school as an added influence. These six female participants (June, Scarlet, Eve, Margie, Penny and Annette) had dress-up boxes set aside for them at home and at playschool or nursery school; they also indicated that they preferred to play dress-up and were not interested in playing outdoors or with children who had no interest in this game. Of the other nine participants, seven (Cerise, Sharon, Judi, Zara, May, Pamela and Trudi) played dress-up with whatever clothes were available. None of the 15 participants had any definite Fashion career plans before the age of 11, but between the ages of eight and 11, four participants (June, Eve and Annette) wanted to become artists and Zara wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps by becoming a dressmaker.

The narratives of three of the participants revealed their Fashion career identities as follows:

Pamela: *"My father took a photograph of me in my big sister's nurses uniform with the cap and all. I did this all the time when I was small. Later on I drew what I liked to wear. I couldn't draw but I tried."*

Trudi: *"I used to wear a doek on my head and pretend to be washing clothes like the older women in the village did. My family found this very amusing, but my mother said that she would never want to see me waste my life just being a housewife."*

Annette: *"all I did was colour in, draw and play dress-up from the dress-up box in school and at home."*

Owie (2003: 25) maintains that role play is a significant factor in and individuals' career identity development and that the most important reason for choosing a particular career is the individual's intrinsic interest in the field which is usually reflected in prioritising academic achievement. He adds that if intrinsic interest is lacking, no amount of training and motivation can significantly increase the person's professional effectiveness. The participants in this study expressed that they were intrinsically motivated and



hence highly interested in Fashion. The importance of family background as indicated by Tinto's longitudinal model of institutional departure and the STF are emphasised in the narratives of the 15 participants.

#### **4.2.2 Theme two: Cultural capital**

Table 4.3 indicates the time, place and people influential in the development of the Fashion career decision making process.

Between the ages 0-11, seven participants had the necessary fashion educational resources, such as television, films, computers and print media contributing towards their education. Six participants did not have these resources as they lived in rural areas and did not have an electrical supply and what they referred to as "luxuries." In the 11-17 year age group, 12 participants had the basic resources necessary to learn about the world around them, while 3 participants (Tom, Pamela and Trudi) relied on role play to develop a Fashion identity. The 12 stories highlighted how socio-economic and cultural capital influenced career identity development. The narratives of 9 participants (June, Scarlet, Cerise, Eve, Zara, May, Margie, Penny and Annette) suggest that they had cultural capital as they had the resources for a Fashion identity to develop. One participant (John) may not have had the resources but he did have access to these resources through the community. Five participants (Sharon, Judi, Tom, Pamela and Trudi) did not have access to fashion resources in the first 8 years of their lives, yet developed a Fashion identity through other means.

The narratives that relate to cultural capital and lack of cultural capital are as follows:

*Cerise: "we were comfortable off.... they bought all the mod cons .... we had more things in our house than my friends had. I used watch tv, look through my aunts pattern books and magazines."*

Penny: *"I loved watching soapies...I taped it to look at the outfits again and again."*

Pamella: *"We didn't have anything. I remember listening to the radio and then when we got a TV it was so exciting. I read a lot before we got a TV."*

Judy: *"After we got lights .... then we bought everything, TV, hi-fi, fridge, stove .... before that it was so boring."*

John: *"I watched TV in other flats, ended up having supper there .... we eventually got our own. My best was watching fashion TV at my friend's house because they had satellite."*

The above comments indicated the participants' family resources. All 15 participants expressed a preference for soap operas from the 90's when they were young, such as Dallas and Dynasty. They believed that they may not have followed the story of the soap operas but that they were always keen on knowing what new fashions they were going to see the actors and actresses wearing.

All the participants had access to magazines, although they were not fashion magazines. Nine of the participants were given magazines by family and friends. These magazines whether local or international, were popular or sought after for information on celebrity fashion trends. Two participants travelled abroad and were able to experience fashion and culture other than that in South Africa.

The results indicated that two families had acquired more resources by the time the participants reached the age of 11, and that while the majority of families (12) did not have access to newspapers, they had access to radios and televisions. Twelve participants had all the resources available from the time they were young, while three participants had access to these resources in the second phase of their lives, namely 11 to 17 years old. The area of

interest to all 15 participants was the social section which was of interest to the participants for insight into local and international trends in fashion. The findings revealed that in the 11 to 17 year age group all the participants had access to the various media, mainly television and magazines, necessary for the assimilation of general knowledge concerning fashion.

Between the ages 0-11 three participants knew that they wanted to pursue a career that was Arts related. The majority of the participants (12) did not know what career they wanted to pursue, although all 15 enjoyed shopping, choosing their own clothes and enjoyed drawing (10), and sewing (7). The findings revealed that in the participants teenage years the participants watched television, particularly programmes that featured fashion.

#### 4.3 OBJECTIVE TWO: FASHION CAREER DECISION-MAKING

NAME	TEMPORALITY				PLACE	SOCIALITY	
	Past 0-11	Past 11-17	Present	Future		Critical moments	Structural influences
1. June	TV, magazines, film Roll play, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes shopping	TV, film, magazines, drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping	Accumulating skills	12	Home school	praise enjoyment grades in favourite subjects	privilege roll models
2. Scarlet	TV, Travel, Roll	TV, film, magazines, drawing,		11	Home	praise	privilege roll

	play,  drawing,  choosing and coordinatin g own clothes,  sewing  shopping	travel, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing			school	Enjoyment  Private lessons  Necessity	models
3.Cerise	TV,  Roll play,  choosing and coordinatin g own clothes  Sewing  Shopping	TV, film, magazines , drawing, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing		13	Home	Praise  Enjoyment  Sewing skills, designing for friends and family	privilege  roll models
4.John	TV, Roll play,  drawing,  coordinatin g clothes for self and family	TV, drawing, choosing and coordinatin g clothes		14	School	Advising  Drawing skills, giving fashion advice, designing for friends	roll models
5.Eve	TV, film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing and coordinatin g own clothes,  sewing  shopping	TV, film, magazines , drawing, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping		12	Home  school	Drawing skills, designing for friends  Grades in Art	privilege  roll models
6.Sharon	Roll	TV,		15	Home	Praise	roll

	play, coordinating clothes	choosing and coordinating clothes, sewing				Sewing skills, selling clothing	models
7.Judi	TV, magazines ,  Roll play,  Shopping, coordinating  own clothes	TV, drawing, choosing and coordinating clothes, sewing		16	Home community	Praise  Advising  Sewing skills	roll models
8.Zara	TV, magazines ,  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing  and   coordinating own clothes  shopping	TV, film, magazines , drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping , sewing		12	Home	Praise  Sewing skills	privilege  roll models
9. Margie	TV, magazines , film  Roll play,  drawing,  choosing  and  coordinating own clothes	TV, film, magazines , drawing, travel, choosing and coordinating own clothes, shopping , sewing		14	Home school	Good grades Drawing skills	privilege  roll models

	shopping						
10. Tom	Working in a small clothing enterprice	TV, film, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing		16	Home	Entrepreneurshi p  Sewing skills	roll models
11. May	TV, magazines , film  Roll play, drawing, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes shopping	TV, film, magazines , drawing, travel, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping , sewing		14	Home	Praise  Sewing skills	privilege  roll models
12. Penny	TV, magazines , film  Roll play, drawing, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes shopping	TV, film, magazines , drawing, travel, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping , sewing		13	Home school	Praise  Drawing skills	privilege  roll models
13. Pamela	Roll play	TV, coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing		14	School communit y	Sewing skills	roll models
14. Annette	TV, magazines , film	TV, film, magazines , drawing, choosing		12	Home school	Good grades in Art Drawing skills and	privilege  roll

	Roll play, drawing, choosing and coordinatin g own clothes shopping	and coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing				sewing skills	models
15.Trudi	Roll play	TV, coordinatin g own clothes, shopping, sewing		26	home	Praise  Sewing skills	roll models

Table 4.4.: Fashion career decision making

#### 4.3.1 Theme three: Privilege

Table 4.4 explains that between the ages 0-11, 11 participants had the necessary educational resources such as television, films, computers and print media contributing towards their education. In the 11-17 year age group, all 15 participants had the basic resources necessary to learn about the world around them. These findings are supported by Tinto's longitudinal model of institution departure and the STF of Patton and McMohan (2006: 8) which state that an individual's career aspirations are dictated by socio-economic circumstances and cultural capital that provide the stimuli for a chosen career (Patton, 2008: 135; Chen, 2005: 314). The findings are also supported by Florida (2000: 231) who posits that access to resources such as print media and electronic media are necessary for designers and prospective designers to "expand their world" and to achieve "*zeitgeist*" by gaining knowledge about art, current events, nature, sport, popular culture and the newest technological advancements.

Three participants (June, Scarlet and Zara) went on overseas holidays and their narratives related that these experiences had influenced their liberal outlook on life and fashion. One participant had made regular trips to either

London, New York or Israel at least once a year and the other two had travelled to Eastern countries once during the 0 to 11 year stage of their lives. The comments below reflect the participants' experience of these travel experiences and their benefits.

*June:.....because we had family overseas we went to London, New York and Israel ...it meant that seeing what was in the shops. I did a lot of shopping there also."*

*Scarlet: "When my Dad packed up his job and bought a boat, we sailed to .....I saw some cool clothes when we stopped in places."*

*Zara: "We went on pilgrimage three times ... .stopped-off in different places on the way there and back .... Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and the places around there....I came back home and got my Mum to make these things for me."*

Table 4.4 illustrates the diverse privileges and under-privileges that socio-economic conditions presented to the participants and Tinto (1993) explains that family background in terms of socio-economic conditions needs to be ideal in providing the necessary resources for developing careers. The above findings is in keeping with Florida's (2000: 230) and Fletcher's (2002: 230) belief that travel broadens an individual's life experiences for a career in Fashion for the majority of the participants in terms of local and international travel. These findings also revealed that the participants decided on a career in fashion at the age of 12, because of their early exposure. For the 12 participants who did not have the privilege of overseas travel, the decision to pursue Fashion as a career occurred after the age of 12. Florida (2000: 230) maintains that exposure to different cultures and first hand experiences of environmental scanning, learning about target markets, psychographics and zeitgeist to be developed and thus is necessary for a career in Fashion.



#### 4.3.2 Theme four: Role model/s

In the first 11 years of their lives, the participants considered their mothers or older sisters (Pamela, whose mother was deceased) to be the most fashionable person. Other member of the immediate (older siblings) and wider family (Grandmothers and aunts) were considered fashionable although they were of less significance in influencing the participants' Fashion career decisions. The narratives of all 15 participants revealed that they found people both in their immediate family and outside of the family, such as a particular teacher or neighbour to be least fashionable. All the participants claim to have had a natural flair for fashion and that they were able to tell fashionable people from those who were not.

In the 11 to 17 year phase of their lives, they did not consider their mothers to be the most fashionable but admired mainly pop stars or local and international celebrities for being fashionable and trend-setters. There was no common pop star among the participants and no specific genre of music that the participants had in common, as each participant had a preference.

The majority of the participants (14) cited their mothers as the person who influenced their interest in fashion before they turned eleven, as indicated in the following comments.

Penny: *"My mum was always so beautifully put together – she always had her own take on fashion. People admired her sense of style."*

Scarlet: *"My dad was proud of his girls as he used to call us. People said that my mum dressed too young for her age, and that she was too preoccupied with clothes. Dad told her not to worry what other people had to say and that she should dress as she wanted as long as he didn't mind."*

Judi: *"My mother dressed to kill. Up till now people talk about the way she dresses. It wasn't expensive....it was classy."*

Pamela: *"I didn't have many clothes but I did know about fashion and clothes. We were given clothes by an aunt who worked in Jo'burg ...she wore very expensive clothes.....so we had some real trendy clothes..... you know that Jo'burg is trendy."*

Cerise: *"My Dad used to freak out because I used to dress like Sheryl Crow when I went clubbing. My Dad used to freak out because he thought that I showed too much belly button."*

Eve: *"I designed for Madonna .....stage costumes..... because I was inspired by her outrageous outfits and I thought that some of her outfits were too tame and needed some zooshing up."*

Pamela: *"Whenever Khanyi Dlomo appeared on TV.....I admired her clothes and wanted these things that she wore."*

#### **4.3.3 Theme five: Poverty**

In the first 11 years of six participants' lives (David, Sharon, Judi, Tom, Pamela and Trudi), they considered themselves to be poor because they did not have the resources that others in the community had. One participant (David) was poor but was able to access resources by way of the community. The other five participants lived in rural areas and thus had no electricity supply, running water and very little access to media. In spite of their socio-economic conditions and being disadvantaged socio-economically their interests were linked to the other participants who were privileged as they improvised in their games, roll play and games. Some of their narratives explain the influences that were instrumental in their Fashion career decisions:

Trudi: *"I didn't have any dolls so I took a mielie cob and cut it out in the shape of a doll that I used to dress up in the clothes that I made from scraps of cloth that I collected."*

Sharon: *"I think that clothes were not important to my parents...they battled to put food on the table."*

Tom: *"My grandmother worked hard sewing pinafores for the women around [local women]....you must remember she was sending my mother to school....so times were tough."*

The living conditions of three participants changed between the ages 9 to 13 when they received electricity and water (Sharon, Judi and Pamela) and they had access to televisions and magazines. The living conditions for Trudi changed when she started working and lived in a staff hostel. This is when her interest in fashion began and when she realised that she had the skills and the talent for a career in Fashion. She decided that when she had saved enough money she would resign from her current job and pursue a career in Fashion.

#### 4.4 OBJECTIVE FIVE: FASHION CAREER CHOICE

NAME	TEMPORALITY				PLACE	SOCIALITY	
	Past 0-11	Past 11-17	Present	Future		Critical moments	Structural influences
1. June	√	√	Accumulating skills	12	Home school	praise  grades in Art	Recognition
2. Scarlet		√		14	Home school	praise  Enjoyment  Necessity	recognition  emancipation
3. Cerise		√		12	Home	praise	Recognition

4. John		√		14	School	praise grades in Art	Emancipation Recognition
5. Eve	√	√		12	Home school	praise grades in Art	Emancipation Recognition
6. Sharon		√		15	Home	praise Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation
7. Judi		√		16	Home community	praise	Emancipation Recognition
8. Zara		√		12	Home	praise enjoyment of work experience	Recognition
9. Margie	√	√		12	Home school	praise grades in Art	Emancipation Recognition
10. Tom	√	√		16	Home	Enjoyment of work experience	Emancipation Recognition
11. May		√		14	Home	Praise for skills Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Recognition
12. Penny	√	√		13	Home school	Praise for skills Grade in Art	Recognition
13. Pamela		√		14	School community	Praise for skills Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation Recognition
14. Annette	√	√		12	Home school	Awards for art	Emancipation

							Recognition
15.Trudi		√		26	home	Praise for skills  Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation  Recognition

Table 4.5: Fashion career choice

#### 4.4.1 Theme six: Emancipation

Between the ages 11 to 17, 10 participants knew that they wanted to pursue Fashion as a career, while 5 decided on fashion as a career in Grade 12 and 8 chose Fashion because they believed that it was a glamorous career, and all 15 had acquired either sewing or drawing skills that they enjoyed doing. The majority of the students (12) were encouraged with praise for their sewing or drawing skills by their parents, particularly their mothers and were supported by their parents in their career choice.

In this study, the majority of the parents had some high school education or had completed secondary school education. Nine out of the 15 participants were first generation higher education students. This means that most of the participants were already at a higher level of education than their parents. This is communicated in the following statements from participants.

*Scarlet: "Mum's biggest regret is that she did not complete high school ..... she had to find a job when they got divorced. I am the first in my family to go to university and my family is so proud of me. My uncles and aunts use me as an example with my cousins to encourage their children to do well at school and to get a university qualification."*

*John: "If I left school and went out to work I would have earned so little. It was my only way of escaping the life I was living. I thought that if I did something that I love and earn a decent salary at the same time it would be an ideal way of earning a living. I wanted to be able to look after my*

*younger brother and sister and provide them with a stable home, when I work.”*

Sharon: *“My parents wanted me to have opportunities that they did not have because their parents did not have the money to send them to university. They said that they would sacrifice their own comforts to send me to university.”*

Pamela: *“My father said that he had no choice about education as money was tight and there were no opportunities in his day.”*

Tom: *“My mother had me when she was in high school. She went back to school after I was born. Then she came to college.”*

May: *“My father finished school and went to work in the shop [family business] .... my mother only went to the shop when they were in a jam, otherwise she was at home. She doesn’t want me to be like her.”*

The above comments reflect the participant’s parents’ concern for their children in terms of occupations and some of the reasons why these participants are motivated to study.

In keeping with Tinto’s Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure which iterates that parental influence is pivotal, the above findings confirm that the parents’ education levels did influence the possibility of their children continuing with their studies, in that the parents desired for the children what they were not able to obtain for themselves. Many of them regretted that they did not continue with their education.

Seven participants believed that higher education was a privilege as they were the first in their immediate and extended family to have attained a higher education qualification. Six of the seven families that considered higher education a privilege also believe that hard work and education was a

means of improving their living conditions. The value that the participants placed on education is reflected below, in Table 4.5.

NAME	TEMPORALITY				PLACE	SOCIALITY	
	Past 0-11	Past 11- 17	Present	Future		Critical moments	Structural influences
1. June	√	√	Accumulating skills		Home  School	praise  grades in Art	Recognition
2. Scarlet		√			Home	praise  Enjoyment  Necessity	recognition  emancipation
3. Cerise		√			Home	praise	Recognition
4. John		√			School	praise  grades in Art	Emancipation  Recognition
5. Eve	√	√			Home	praise  grades  in Art	Emancipation  Recognition
6. Sharon		√			Home	praise  Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation
7. Judi		√			Home	praise	Emancipation  Recognition
8. Zara		√			Home	praise  enjoyment of work experience	Recognition
9. Margie	√	√			Home	praise	Emancipation

						grades in Art	Recognition
10. Tom	√	√			Home	Enjoyment of work experience	Emancipation Recognition
11. May		√			Home	Praise for skills  Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Recognition
12. Penny	√	√			Home school	Praise for skills  Grade in Art	Recognition
13. Pamela		√			School community	Praise for skills  Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation Recognition
14. Annette	√	√			Home school	Awards for art	Emancipation Recognition
15. Trudi		√			home	Praise for skills  Enjoyment of pastimes and hobbies	Emancipation Recognition

Table 4.11: Fashion personality

#### 4.4.2 Theme Seven: Recognition

Fourteen participants chose Fashion as a career because they want recognition for their skills and talents. The reason for enrolling in the Fashion programme was to gain a qualification that would enable them to be the 'best' or experts in the field of Fashion. Of these 14 participants, eight participants (Scarlet, John, Eve, Judi, Margie, Tom, Pamela and Trudi) wanted recognition and emancipation.



The summarised content in Table 4.4 indicates that eight participants believe that they placed education as a means of advancing themselves, while they have a love for Fashion and had acquired some skills prior to enrolling in the fashion programme. These eight participants also believed that they would gain recognition from a career in Fashion. Ten participants chose Fashion because they had skills necessary for a career in Fashion and because they felt that a well paying career will give them security and economic independence.

#### 4.4.3 Theme eight: Personality Types of the Participants

Table 4.6 Participants' personality types

Name	Realistic	Investigative	Artistic	Social	Enterprising	Conventional
1. June	Co-ordinating		Creative		Team leader	
2. Scarlet	Co-ordinating	Problem solving	Creative	Team player		
3. Cerise	Working with hands	Problem solving	Creative		Team leader	
4. John	Working with hands and co-ordinating		Creative		Team leader	
5. Eve	Co-ordinating	Problem solving	Creative		Team leader	
6. Sharon	Working with hands		Creative	Team player		
7. Judi	Working with hands		Creative	Team player		Order

8.Zara	Working with hands		Creative	Team player		
9. Margie	Co-ordinating	Problem solving	Creative		Team leader	
10. Tom	Working with hands		Creative	Team player		
11.May	Working with hands	Problem solving	Creative	Team player		Order
12. Penny	Working with hands	Problem solving	Creative		Team leader	
13.Pamela	Working with hands	Problem solving	Creative	Team player		
14.Annette	Co-ordinating		Creative		Team leader	Order
15.Trudi	Working with hands	Problem solving	Creative	Team player		Order

Table 4.12: represents the participants' personality types

Table 4.6 indicates that the 15 participants considered themselves to be creative as they all described themselves as having always produced garments, sketches and drawings. Six participants (June, Scarlet, John, Eve, Margie and Annette) described themselves as being skilful co-ordinators of garments and outfits. One of these five participants (John) claimed to have always preferred to work with his hands, and nine participants preferred to work with their hands rather than tools and machinery than work with abstract problems. Eight participants (Scarlet, Cerise, Eve, May, Margie, Penny, Pamela, and Trudi) believed that they solved abstract problems when they designed ranges for 'unknown clients' as in the case of designing for mass retail stores. Five of these 15 participants enjoyed co-ordinating and organising events.

Eight participants (Scarlet, Cerise, Eve, Margie, May, penny, Pamela and Trudi) achieved high grades in Mathematics. Eight participants (Scarlet, Sharon, Judi, Zara, Tom, May, Pamela and Trudi) enjoyed working with other people, so they can be classified as having the characteristics of a social personality. Seven participants (June, Cerise, John, Julia, Margie, Penny and Annette) have been involved in group projects and have taken the lead in negotiating and working with team members. Eight participants (Scarlet, Eve, Judi, Margie, May, Penny, Annette and Trudi) liked order in their lives and preferred to be organised but seven of these eight participants' narratives indicated that their designs were unconventional, in that they liked to be 'different'. Trudi however indicated a preference for practical and wearable designs that are commercial.

As the narratives revealed that the majority of the participants were artistic, social, investigative and enterprising, it can be assumed that a combination of these three personalities are suitable for a career in Fashion. These findings are in keeping with the findings of Holland (1996: 394) who maintains that individuals are most often a combination of the six personality types for any given career.

The above findings complement the literature by Hall and Chandler (2005) who state that individuals who place importance in education desire knowledge; individuals who choose a career for 'enjoyment' are those with a calling orientation; those seeking security focus on the earning power of a career; and those who seek recognition are interested in gaining favourable judgement of their competence.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

The findings indicate that the participants, namely the Fashion students, developed a fashion identity between the ages 3 to 8 years old when they participated in role-play and began to draw and colour-in. Fashion career

decisions were made during the years 8 to 17 the participants developed their drawing and/or sewing skills for which they received praise from close family members. The choice of fashion as a career was made by the participants based on their acquired drawing, sewing, designing and co-ordinating skills and their enjoyment of these skills. The participants sought recognition for their talents by choosing Fashion as a career.

The participants' personalities can be described mainly as artistic, problem solvers and team-leaders.

The next chapter presents the conclusions that arose from the research findings, highlights recommendations for the interview selection of Fashion students, and makes suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study highlighted the significance of student interview selection for higher education in general, and for the Fashion programme in particular. The Systems Theory Framework (Patton and McMahon, 2006b: 8) which maintains that life experiences, both direct and vicarious are learning experiences that shape individual's career interests, values and choices; which is applicable across socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds; was used to underpin this study. Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure emphasizes the importance of pre-entry interactions within family backgrounds, skills and abilities and prior schooling that impact the goals and commitments of students, was used to determine whether students remain or drop-out of a programme of study. In order to ascertain the personalities of the students, Holland's (1994) 'person-environment fit' typology was used to organize the students into personality categories that best match different programmes of study, jobs and work environments.

#### 5.1. ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES

**5.1.1. Objective one:** To identify the life experiences that contributed to the participants Fashion identity.

The participants developed a Fashion identity from a young age (around the age of 5) from people around them, such as close family members (mother and grandmother) as they felt that the games, role play, activities and interests were encouraged by their families. In the case of the privileged students, they shopped for their own clothes while the disadvantaged participants co-ordinated their own outfits. The participants may have

unknowingly defined their Fashion identity development based on the ideas and suggestions of the people in those close to them.

**5.1.2 Objective two:** To identify the life experiences that contributed to the participants Fashion career decision.

Participants indicated that their skills and abilities in sewing and drawing were developed due to the influence of close family members. The participants also indicated that they were in their teenage years when they realised that they would have to get a qualification to gain employment in any field of Fashion. Since they enjoyed fashion related skills, they worked towards perfecting these skills without actually realising that they wanted a career in Fashion.

The participants made Fashion career decisions by continuing to indulge in pastimes, interests and improving on their fashion related skills. They began to take note of what people wore and showed an awareness of fashion issues and found solutions or answers to their own fashion needs, in other words, they capitalized on their skills and abilities.

**5.1.3 Objective Three:** To determine what life experiences contributed to the participants' choosing Fashion as a career.

As the findings suggest 'opportunity,' the statements dealing with 'parents combined level of education' (see Table 4.11, Chapter 4) and 'I want to be independent' (see Table 4.11, Chapter 4) were significant factors in career choice. Both these statements relate to the economic area of the participants career development. The disadvantaged participants applied for many programmes of study so that they did not under-capitalise on the opportunities that were available to them (see Table 4.10, Chapter 4). They stated that although they wanted a career in Fashion, they could not confine themselves to just one study opportunity and therefore applied for entrance in different programmes in the event that they were unsuccessful in the Fashion entrance tests.

The participants were motivated and enthusiastic about Fashion as a career. They saw a career in Fashion as a means of earning a living with self-taught skills, advancing their education and being economically independent. They wanted to develop their skills and expertise as they felt that they were good at Fashion, and they wanted to earn more than their parents' did by enrolling in a Fashion programme and then working in that field. Some of the participants indicated that fashion is glamorous and that they wanted recognition as leading designers.

**5.1.4 Objective Four:** To find out what personality types are best suited for admission to the Fashion programme.

The narratives revealed that the participants chose their own high school courses and non-traditional career path such as Fashion, especially in the case of the two male participants. The participants described themselves as artistic, enterprising and social which has significance as it indicates the personality type best suited to a career in Fashion.

There were several descriptors that showed significance and added to the overall positive indication that personality was important when choosing careers. Participants who felt strongly about their career in Fashion regarded their personality as the main determining factor in choosing their career. The researcher views 'personality' as a significant career choice factor as the majority of the participants because they made their career choice on their own which lends credence to what the literature has said about individuals making their own career decisions based on what the career that they identify with and their self-confidence. The researcher agrees that the participants who are serious about a career in Fashion are those that started developing a Fashion identity early in life.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In conducting this career life history study, the researcher took robust measures to ensure ethically sound research practices (Denzin and Lincoln: 2005) and was thus limited in many respects.

This study was limited in the gender composition and size of the sample due to the small population size (31). The researcher went on the advice of Richmond (2000: 38); Gaskell (2000: 43); and Connelly and Clandinin (2000: 9) who suggested 15 as the minimum number of participants that can be used in life history research as it requires many hours of interviewing over many months; and transcribing copious numbers of interviews, to be able to obtain the required data. The small sample size did not intend to generalise the findings to a wider audience but was meant to gain an insight into the complexity of a Fashion career development.

Another limitation was the use of a predominantly female (87% female) sample which prohibited the findings to be understood fully in terms of male development. This was beyond the researchers' control as the researcher was confined by the graduates in the Fashion programme at the DUT, and because Fashion is considered as a typically female career.

The study focussed on only a small segment of the participants' career life experiences, such as socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds and did not include other potentially significant factors that may influence a career in fashion. This was necessary to keep the study focused and manageable because as discussed earlier, life history research can produce voluminous data. The researcher therefore suggests that other studies can be used in conjunction with this study to add to the body of knowledge in interview student selection procedures for selecting Fashion students.

The researcher relied on the accounts or narratives of the participants in the data collection process, which has the potential to lead to bias. The



participants may have presented themselves in a manner that was more socially desirable, but the use of a series of personal interviews served as a means of obtaining many versions and as a means of verifying the data.

As the sample was made up of Fashion degree students only, the sample limited the study's generalisability to other populations, thereby limiting its extrapolation to students from other programmes of study. This research becomes transferable by depicting the setting and enabling it to be applied to other similar settings; generalisable because it can be externally validated by graduates of the Fashion programme at DUT; dependable because the data, method and decisions can be audited; and objective as the researcher reflected critically on the methodology.

### 5.3 PROPOSED MODEL OF SELECTION FOR SELECTION OF FASHION STUDENTS

A proposed model for the selection of Fashion students is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

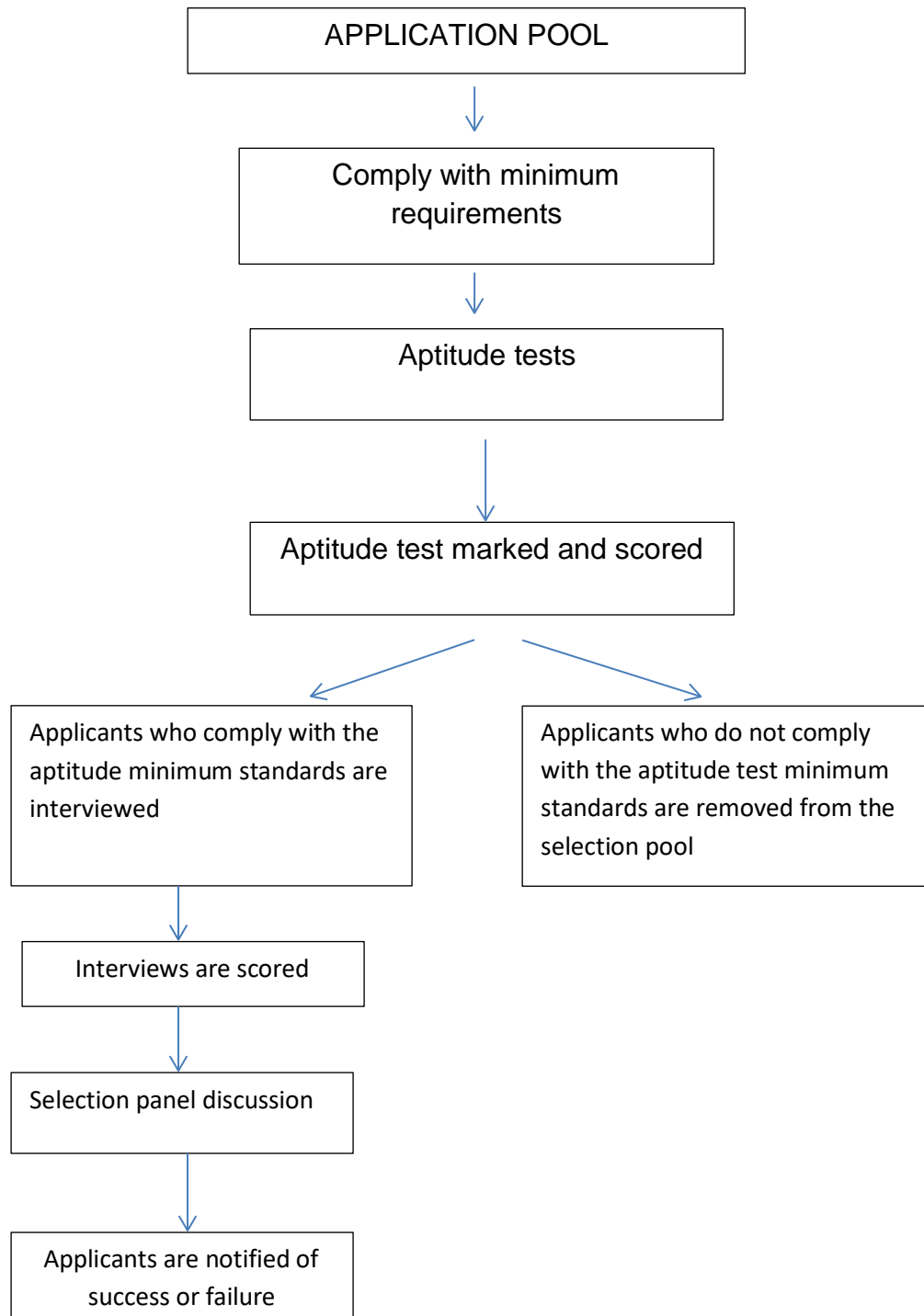


Figure 5.1: A proposed model for the selection of Fashion students at DUT.

The researcher suggests (as illustrated in Figure 5.1) that an applicant who meets the higher education and DUT Fashion programme minimum requirements based on their Grade 12 results, be allowed to participate in the aptitude test for Fashion. Only those applicants who pass or meet the minimum requirements of the aptitude test should be interviewed. After the applicants are interviewed, the selection panel should be given an opportunity to discuss the interviews and the candidates before making the final selection decision. Thereafter applicants should be notified of their acceptance or rejection by the Department of Fashion.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- While environment is important, it is not the most important issue when defining career identities. The researcher believes that the participants lived within a host of environmental factors and developed a Fashion identity. That is not to say, that the people, places, and things that surrounded the participants as they grew did not affect their career identities. The interview protocol for student selection of Fashion students should therefore regard the influence and impact of close family members and mothers in particular, as being important.
- Interview panels should seek to determine the opportunities that the applicants had in developing drawing and sewing skills. Many of the Black participants did not have any drawing skills on enrolment in the Fashion programme as they did not have the choice of doing Art in school and nor did they have school guidance councillors to advise them on careers.
- The literature suggested mentoring and role-models as positive forces in the career decision making process. Selection panels

should therefore concentrate on the experiences of practical skills that are necessary to succeed in the world of fashion.

- Interview panels should seek to discover the reasons for applicants' choosing to apply for Fashion as a programme of study together with the skills that the applicant has that relates to Fashion.
- Selection panels should try to ascertain the personality type by asking questions that will indicate the applicant's personality.
- As career development is a process that develops over time, the applicant should be able to present a portfolio that indicates the progress that was made through the years as it has more value as an indicator of personality. Sections of the portfolio may include examples of what was already accomplished. The portfolio should also include notes, newspaper clippings and articles of interest for future investigation.

The findings indicate that personality, drive, ambition, and creativity synthesized participant's career in Fashion. The researcher therefore recommends that the following categories and questions (within these categories) should be included on the interview protocol to ascertain suitability and preparedness for selection to the Fashion programme at the DUT.

#### *Recommendations for the interview process*

The researcher suggests (as illustrated in Figure 5.2) that a staff meeting should be convened to discuss the following matters:

- the selection process in terms of what worked and what did not work in the previous year;

- panel members should purposefully be selected or elected;
- there should be training and a academic development provided for panel members with respect to interview etiquette;
- panel members should review the interview questions and formulate possible answers;
- panel members should familiarise themselves with the scoring system; and
- panel members should make detailed notes in order to reflect on the interview process.

According to Hughes (2002: 18), interview selection panellists should be trained as the main goal of an interview for student selection is to gather information and to assess the applicant's past experiences, knowledge, skills and abilities. Therefore during the interview, the applicant should be made to feel comfortable and welcome, by:

- being greeted and being asked to be seated;
- asking for their portfolio;
- providing a brief outline of what is expected of them during in the interview , e.g. "We are going to ask you a few questions and answer any questions that you may have";
- asking the predetermined questions;
- asking all candidates the same questions; and
- taking notes during the interview.

#### *Proposed sample interview questions*

1. What skills do you think are necessary for a career in fashion?
2. What are your parents' views of fashion as a career choice?
3. What are your interests?
4. What dress advice would you give a person who is large-busted?
5. Why did you choose a career in fashion?

6. Name a famous person that you would like to design for and explain why.
7. How did your interest in fashion develop?
8. How would you describe yourself?
9. At what age did you become aware of fashion?
10. Who inspired your interest in fashion?

The researcher suggests (as illustrated in Figure 5.2) that academic development or staff training procedures be conducted as follows:

*Recommendations for Academic Development*

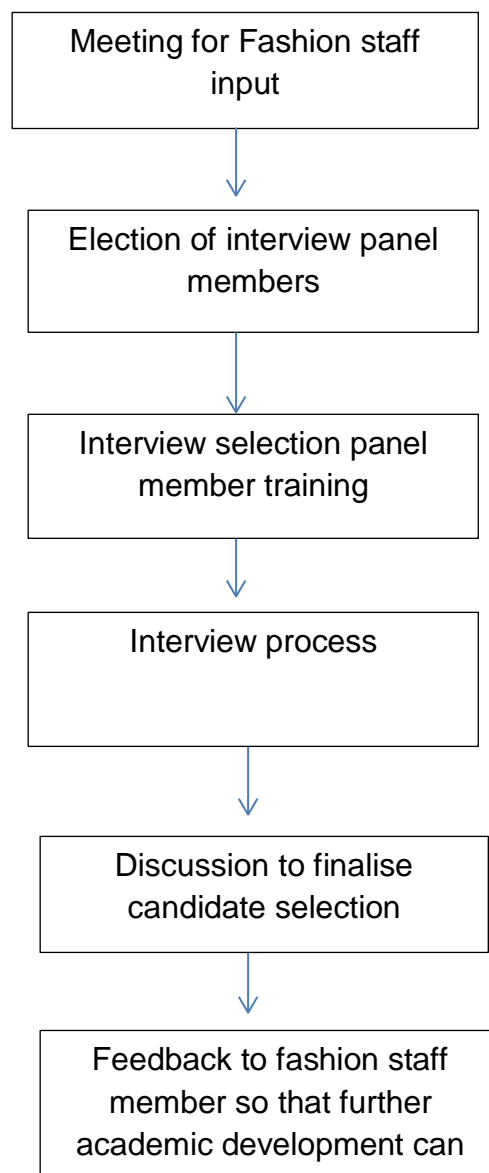


Figure 5.2: Recommendations for academic development

### *Recommendations for training and assessing or evaluating the interview*

According to Richard, McManus and Maitlis (1988: 296), it is important for the interview panel to comprise at least three members who are present for all the interviews for the procedure to be reliable and stable. Harris and Owen (2007: 234) add that admission interviews can be streamlined and efficient, yet remain informative if the members of the selection panel are trained to conduct and to assess the interviews. The researcher suggests that academic staff be appointed and trained to conduct interviews. The same interview panel should conduct all interviews to ensure the same criteria is used and for the interview selection to be considered fair.

Training for the panellists should take the form of an introduction to interview protocol and a scoring or rating system. The composition of the panel could be represented by two academic staff members and a recent graduate of the department of Fashion. McGaghie (2002: 1087) agrees that using more than one panel member to enhance the reliability of the interview and the presence of a student will make the interview less intimidating for the applicant. Training can take the form of simulated or mock interviews and from videotapes. Mock interviews will provide the panellists with hands-on training thus alleviating potential problem that they may encounter. According to Powis, Neame, Bristow and Murphy (1988: 765), panellists who receive training by an Academic Development practitioner will be able to comfortably adhere to an allocated time limit of 15 minutes per applicant.

Previous literature on scoring interviews suggests that a scoring rubric be used on the possible answers that the interview panel generated from the mock interviews (Dixon, Wang, Calvin, Dineen and Tomlinson, 2002: 409). The anticipated answers that are generated from the mock interview can be used as benchmarks for scoring the responses by the applicants to the interview questions.

The researcher has developed a standardised interview framework in order to determine if an answer is good, average or poor and possible answers to the interview questions that will help to mitigate subjectivity in the scoring process. The subjective scoring of applicants will distinguish applicants and provide a 'sense' of a 'good' applicant.

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

CAO Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION	Un satisfactory 0	satisfac tory 2	good 3	Excellent 5
<p>What skills do you think are necessary for a career in fashion?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Sewing, drawing, reading and writing</p>				
<p>What are your parents' view of fashion as a career choice?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Supportive of career decision Recognize my potential as a designer</p>				
<p>What are your interests?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Watching soap operas, films, music, drawing, sewing, reading</p>				
<p>What dress advice would you give a</p>				



<p>person who is large-busted?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Less design details on bodice, plain darker coloured tops</p>				
<p>Why did you choose a career in fashion?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Improving talents and recognition as a designer, fame and fortune</p>				
<p>Name a famous person that you would like to design for and explain why.</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Name of local or international celebrity + reason e.g. improving on current dress / contribute to wardrobe</p>				
<p>How did your interest in fashion develop?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Dress-up games</p> <p>Choosing own clothes</p> <p>Coordinating outfits for self and others</p> <p>Role models- usually mother</p>				

<p>How would you describe yourself?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Creative- created designs</p> <p>Problem solver- designing for difficult clients</p> <p>Team player- have a natural ability to work with others in communicating ideas in written and in visual forms</p>				
<p>At what age did you become aware of fashion?</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Between 5 and 8 –</p> <p>e.g. films/TV/ teacher/mother/role model</p>				
<p>Who inspired your interest in fashion</p> <p><b><u>Model answer:</u></b></p> <p>Role model- usually a close family member who is either a designer or a dressmaker</p>				

Table 5.3: Interview assessment

The interviewers should rate the candidates on their performance at the interview using scale terms of 'unsatisfactory', 'satisfactory', 'good' and 'excellent'. An unsatisfactory score should indicate that the applicant does not meet any of the criteria; 'satisfactory or borderline' should indicate that acceptance or rejection will depend on the applicants' performance in the rest of the battery of tests. A 'good' score will indicate that the applicant meets the

minimum requirements, and excellent should indicate that the applicant has shown exceptional characteristics and attributes.

During the interview, the interviewer must note aspects of the candidate's responses and at the end of the interview assign the candidate an overall score on the scale listed below (*Appendix 5A*). At the conclusion of the day's interviews, all the panellists should discuss the scores and the comments they recorded on their scoring sheets about each candidate. This will allow them to discuss the potential suitability of each applicant so that they can arrive at a consensus regarding each candidate or applicant.

All aspects of the interview should be streamlined, especially the scoring of the interview (Harris and Owen, 2007: 234). To this end scoring or rating can take place as follows:

Any category of the interview that yields the most or highest score should apply to the candidate, e.g. a candidate who gets 5 unsatisfactory points should not be considered for selection or a candidate who gets 6 borderline score should be considered subject to the written test results.

#### *Recommendations for post interview procedures*

After the interviews the selection panel should discuss and decide the list of successful candidates who have been selected, before the applicants are notified.

The researcher's viewpoint is that the key to suitability and preparedness for a career in Fashion may be found in the pre-entry attributes of Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure. This model has important implications for student interview selection in that it will identify suitable and prepared applicants, recruit those who will complete and graduate in the minimum time, thereby potentially increasing throughput and output rates of the Department of Fashion at the DUT.

At the conclusion of the interview, interviewees must be informed about how long it will take the panel to make a decision and by when they can expect to hear from the department regarding the outcome of the interview.

This structured interview protocol will have set standards and time while allowing the selection panel to establish the applicants' knowledge; determine suitability and to recognize any potential that the applicant may have for the Fashion programme.

## **5.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge regarding student interview selection in general, and for student interview selection in Fashion in particular. It also provides an insight into the type of characteristics and personalities that are required of for success in a Fashion programme.

The important contribution of this research is to broaden an understanding of the complex concerns of standardizing the oral interview selection protocol for the fashion programme at the DUT.

Adopting a broader outlook links the common life experiences of the participants' fashion career identity, choice and decisions, and provides an insight into the personality type that is suitable for fashion.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research may be conducted as follows.

- The data gathered in this study can be explored at a later date in order to update the research topic of student selection for future fashion students. The knowledge and experience since this study may change in the ensuing

years and the participants' career life stories in fashion career development (Hall and Chandler, 2005: 163) will therefore need to be investigated.

- Focus on an exclusive student population such as male fashion students, a particular race group of student or students in the master's programme (Goodwin, 2002: 257). The personal profile of the participants may provide a template for a comparative study of the different groups of Fashion students that have not been represented in this study (Land: 2009: 355).
- Interpret the data generated by this study using critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001:164) to examine and apply these perspectives which may yield different insights.
- Analyse the career life histories of the participants in this study using Labov's Structural Analysis (Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008: 38) by asking the participants to present a written account of their experiences (Goodley and Clough, 2004: 332). The researcher can also visually record the participants during the interview instead of audio taping them which is a method that would require consideration to ensure confidentiality (Barriball and While, 1994: 328).
- Use visual data such as photographs and/or video recordings for analysis (Roschelle, 2000: 711).

## **5.6 CLOSING REMARKS**

This study chronicled the career life histories of the 15 Fashion students to make students' voices heard as this is largely absent in literature about careers in Fashion. The researcher privileged the experience of the postgraduate Fashion students to provide a framework from which to create

an interview protocol for the selection of Fashion students. It is hoped that the findings, recommendations and the framework proposed by this study are used by the Department of Fashion at the DUT to recruit or select prospective Fashion students who in the words of Giannakopoulos and Buckley (2007: 192) are prepared for higher education, have the potential, and who have every chance of completing and graduating from the Fashion programme in the minimum time.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX**

#### **A Letter of Informed Consent**



B	Interview Time-table
C	Interview Schedule 1
D	Interview Schedule 2
E	Interview Schedule 3

## **APPENDIX A - LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: Towards the development of an oral selection procedure in Fashion.

The study will investigate the life histories of B Tech Fashion Design students to design oral selection procedures for acceptance into the undergraduate programme in the Department of Fashion and Textiles at the Durban University of Technology. The results of this study will provide a framework for the oral selection process in the hope of recruiting suitable candidates for the Fashion Design programme. It is also hoped that the results of this study will help guidance councillors in secondary schools to provide information to students who are interested in Fashion Design as a career.

The researcher undertakes to assure you of the following:

- to maintain your confidentiality
- to protect your rights and welfare, i.e. to ensure that no harm comes to you as a result of your participation in this research
- to present information and transcripts used in this research in such a way as to maintain your dignity, and if in doubt to first consult with you
- to make available to you the final copy of this research publication
- you are free to withdraw from this research at any time, if the need should arise.
- no manipulation or withholding of information is involved in this study

It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform selection procedures in other programmes at the DUT and indeed other higher education institutions. Thank you for volunteering to add to a body of academic knowledge in life history research.

Yours sincerely

-----

V. Reddy

D Tech: Language Practice

Please place an [x] in the box below to indicate your consent:

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM AND HEREBY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY	
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I, \_\_\_\_\_(participants name), agree to participate in this study, to add to the body of academic knowledge on the development of a Fashion Designer.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TIME TABLE

Names	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Duration of interview	Date of interview
1. June	Female	19	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	15/05 - 12/06 - 10/07 14/08 - 11/09 - 02/10
2. Scarlet	Female	26	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	22-05 - 19/06 - 17/07 21/08 - 18/09 - 16/10 20/11 - 26/03

3.Cerise	Female	24	Coloured	Average of 45 min for each interview	29-05 – 26/06 – 24/07 28/08 – 25/09 – 23/10 27/11 – 16/04
4.John	Male	24	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	12/06 – 10/07 – 31/08 11/09 – 09/10 – 13/11 05/02
5.Eve	Female	24	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	12/06 – 17/07 – 14/08 18/09 – 16/10 – 20/11
6.Sharon	Female	23	Black	Average of 45 min for each interview	19/06 – 24/07 – 21/08 25/09 – 23/10 – 22/11
7.Judi	Female	23	Black	Average of 45 min for each interview	10/07 - 14/08 - 11/09 02/10 - 23/10 – 22/11
8.Zara	Female	24	Indian	Average of 45 min for each interview	15-05 - 19/06 – 24/07 21/08 - 25/09 – 23/10 22/11
9. Margie	Female	26	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	22-05 - 19/06 - 17/07 21/08 - 18/09 - 16/10
10. Tom	Male	24	Black	Average of 45 min for each interview	29-05 – 26/06 – 24/07 28/08 – 25/09 – 23/10 27/11
11.May	Female	24	Indian	Average of 45 min for each interview	12/06 – 17/07 – 14/08 18/09 – 16/10 – 20/11 05/02
12. Penny	Female	26	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	12/05 - 22-05 - 19/06 17/07 - 21/08 - 18/09 16/10
13.Pamela	Female	26	Black	Average of 45 min for each interview	19/06 – 24/07 – 21/08 25/09 – 23/10 – 22/11
14.Annette	Female	24	White	Average of 45 min for each interview	10/07 - 14/08 - 11/09 02/10 - 23/10 – 22/11 05/02
15.Trudi	Female	36	Black	Average of 45 min for each interview	15-05 - 19/06 – 24/07 21/08 - 25/09 – 23/10 22/11 – 16/04

Appendix B

### **APPENDIX C- INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: Towards the development of an oral selection procedure in Fashion: Using life histories.

The purpose of this interview is to help you in recalling your own life experiences. The information you provide will become an important link in my research study. Please note that there are no „right“ and „wrong“ answers. Your life story will serve as a means of conveying a picture of your experiences and a profile of the ideal fashion design student. Thank you for signing the consent form.

### **Age 0 – 11 years old**

1. Please tell me about your childhood, from the time you can remember to 11 years old?
2. What was nursery school like?
3. What was primary school like?
4. What was your home-life like?
5. Describe your relationship with your parents
6. Describe your relationship with your siblings
7. Describe your relationship with your wider-family
8. Describe your relationship within the community
9. Describe your relationship with your teachers
10. Describe your relationship with your friends

### **Age 11 – 17 High School**

1. Please tell me about your life between the ages 11 to 17 years old?
2. What was your high school like?
3. Describe your home-life during this time?
4. Describe your relationship with your parents
5. Describe your relationship with your siblings
6. Describe your relationship with your wider-family
7. Describe your relationship with your teachers
8. Describe your relationship with your friends

Is there anything else that you would like to add? Thank you for taking time out to talk to me. I will turn off the tape now. Thank you for your time and patience. I enjoyed speaking with you.

## **APPENDIX D- INTERVIEW 2**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: Towards the development of an oral selection procedure in Fashion: Using life histories.

The purpose of this interview is to help you in recalling your own life experiences. The information you provide will become an important link in my research study. Please note that there are no „right“ and „wrong“ answers. Your life story will serve as a means of conveying a picture of your experiences and a profile of the ideal fashion design student. Thank you for signing the consent form.

### **Age 0 – 11 years old**

1. Describe any fashion experiences that you had as a child- before nursery school.
2. Describe any fashion experiences that you had while in nursery school.
3. How did your parents dress?
4. How did you dress?
5. How did your siblings dress?
6. How did your community dress?
7. What activities did you enjoy?
8. What activities did you not enjoy?
9. What subjects did you enjoy?
10. What subjects did you not enjoy?
11. Describe the teachers that you liked
12. What was your home-life like?
13. Describe your relationship with your parents
14. How much importance did your parents put on fashion?
15. Describe your relationship with your siblings
16. How much importance did your siblings put on fashion?
17. Describe your relationship with your wider-family
18. How much importance did your wider family place on fashion?
19. Describe your relationship within the community
20. How much importance did your community put on fashion?
21. Describe your relationship with your teachers
22. How much importance did your community put on fashion?
23. Describe your relationship with your friends

24. How much importance did your community put on fashion?

**Age 11 – 17 High School**

1. Please tell me about your life between the ages 11 to 17 years old?
2. Describe any fashion experiences that you had as a child- before nursery school.
3. Describe any fashion experiences that you had while in nursery school.
4. How did your parents dress?
5. How did you dress?
6. How did your siblings dress?
7. How did your community dress?
8. What activities did you enjoy?
9. What activities did you not enjoy?
10. What subjects did you enjoy?
11. What subjects did you not enjoy?
12. Describe the teachers that you liked
13. What was your home-life like?
14. Describe your relationship with your parents
15. How much importance did your parents put on fashion?
16. Describe your relationship with your siblings
17. How much importance did your siblings put on fashion?
18. Describe your relationship with your wider-family
19. How much importance did your wider family place on fashion?
20. Describe your relationship within the community
21. How much importance did your community put on fashion?
22. Describe your relationship with your teachers
23. How much importance did your community put on fashion?
24. Describe your relationship with your friends
25. How much importance did your community put on fashion?



Is there anything else that you would like to add? Thank you for taking time out to talk to me. I will turn off the tape now.

Thank you for your time and patience. I enjoyed speaking with you.

### **APPENDIX E- INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 3**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: Towards the development of an oral selection procedure in Fashion.

The purpose of this interview is to help you in recalling your own life experiences. The information you provide will become an important link in my research study. Please note that there are no „right“ and „wrong“ answers. Your life story will serve as a means of conveying a picture of your experiences and a profile of the ideal fashion design student. Thank you for signing the consent form.

**OBJECTIVE ONE :TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE EXPERIENCES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR FASHION IDENTITY**

- a) When did you first become aware of fashion?
- b) How would you describe the environment in which you grew up in terms of fashion?
- c) Was there anyone you thought was particularly fashionable? If yes, describe them.
- d) Is there anyone who sticks out as being particularly not fashionable? Please tell me more about this?
- e) What kind of clothes did your family wear? Did you agree with their choice of clothing?
- f) What kind of clothes did you wear as a child? Who choose your clothing and did you agree with the choice?
- g) What did you want to do when you grew up?

**B. OBJECTIVE TWO :TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE EXPERIENCES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR CAREER DECISION**

- When you look back on your life, who, what, when and where have been important to your career?
- When you look back on your life, what plans did you make for your career? Could you describe these in more detail?
- What personal resources do you think helped you decide on fashion as a career? Could you describe these in more detail?
- What part did different organizations such as school, clubs, etc play in your career?

**OBJECTIVE THREE :TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE EXPERIENCES  
HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO FASHION AS A CAREER CHOICE AND  
TO CONTINUE TO POST GRADUATE STUDY**

- What were your favourite subjects in high school?
- Who was your favourite teacher? What was your teacher favourite like? How did he/she dress?
- What did you plan to do on finishing high school?
- Did you choose someone to pattern your life after?
- Whom did you admire at this stage of your life? Within the family? Community? High school?
- Who chose your clothing? How fashion conscious were you? What were your favourite clothes? How much did you spend on clothes?
- Was keeping-up with the latest fashion important to you?
- Did you make your own clothes? Did you choose your own clothes? If yes, how differently did you dress from your peers?
- Did your peers have the same/similar interest in clothing?
- What specific incidents did you have regarding fashion?
- Did your peers want to go onto higher education/ college? Did your peers want to go to university or UoT's? What were their interests?
- What was your matric results like? Did it qualify you for university?
- Was Fashion Design your first career choice?
- When did you first settle into your career choice?
- How were your career aspirations dealt with by your parents when you decided on the fashion programme of study?
- When you look at your life now, how did your parents impact on your career today?

**C. OBJECTIVE FOUR :TO FIND OUT WHAT IS THE IDEAL  
PERSONALITY TYPE FOR A CAREER IN FASHION**

- What words would you use to describe a career in fashion?

- If you look at your life now, what part does your career in fashion play in it?
- What would your life be like if you had not opted for a career in fashion?
- What personal qualities have been important in your career?  
Could you describe how these are important?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think your friends would describe you?
- If you were sitting next to a stranger on a bus, how do you think this person would describe you?

**At the end of the interview:**

We are coming to the end of our discussion. Have you any additional comments to make about the issues we discussed? Thank you for taking time out to talk to me. I will turn off the tape now.