

**DUAL-CAREER COUPLES' PERCEPTIONS OF CAREER BARRIERS.**

by

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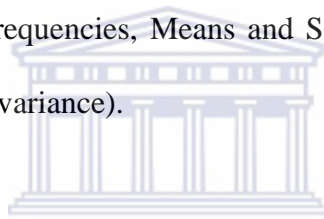
## ABSTRACT

Research indicates that approximately fifteen years ago there were over three (3) million dual-career couples representing 20% of dual-worker couples. It is expected that the amount of dual-career couples will continue to increase, as most college students, both men and women, anticipate participating in a career as well as in a family (Spiker- Miller & Kees, 1995). Individuals and organizations are confronted with a hyper turbulent environment and individuals are also faced with a myriad of challenges and adversity in their work and personal lives. Due to the economy and the changing needs of individuals, today very few families reflect the configuration of a typical family (a husband who worked outside the home, a wife who fulfilled the duties of homemaker and child-carer), as both partners are normally employed. The dual-career couple phenomenon has added to the pressure of managing multiple demands and has a considerable impact on the nature of people's careers (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Dual-career couples' career advancement is largely affected by the career barriers they perceive to encounter. The perceptions of career barriers encountered differ from one couple to another based on factors such as: age, race and parental demand (children). Differences may also exist between partners in a dual-career relationship based on their gender.

Most studies that have been conducted have looked at work-life balance of dual-career couples or have focused on the problems dual-career couples face solely from the woman's perspective. The aim of this study is to look at dual-career couples not only from female's perspective and to tap into their perceptions regarding career barriers encountered in the workplace. The findings could help organisations realize the importance of assisting dual-career couples and how they could improve their career development. Dual-career couples

therefore warrant attention as a special group seeing as the career salience, strategies and transitions of one partner inevitably affects those of the other, which could also have repercussions for their employers (Smith, 1997).

A self-developed Demographic Questionnaire and the Career Barriers Inventory (Revised) was used to gather the data. The research was conducted within a large retail organisation. The sample comprised of men and women, permanent and contract employees within the following departments: Human Resources, Marketing, Logistics, Finance, Group Merchandise Procurement (GMP), Buying, Sourcing, Audit, Planning and Group Services. The sampling procedure that was utilised was non-probability sampling. Statistical analyses involved descriptive statistics (Frequencies, Means and Standard deviations) and inferential statistics (T-Test and Analysis of variance).



The study revealed that the most highly rated career barriers which respondents perceived to experience or which affected their career advancement were multiple-role conflict, decision-making difficulties, sex discrimination and racial discrimination. Whilst, the career barriers which were rated the lowest by respondents included disapproval by significant others, disability/health concerns and discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace is partially accepted because there are statistically significant differences regarding the perceptions amongst females and males in terms of lack of confidence as a career barrier. The hypothesis proposing that there are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have and those who do not have children, is partially accepted, as there was a statistically significant difference

regarding disapproval by significant others. The findings for the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace is partially supported because significant differences were found for the following career barriers: difficulties with network/socialisation, lack of confidence and race discrimination based on employees' race. Lastly, significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace was rejected, as no significant differences regarding career barriers based on employees' age were found.

Amongst others, a limitation of this study is evident. The study may lack generisability as the sampling procedure used was non-probability sampling and only included those employees who were easily accessible. Additionally, a quantitative study was used by making use of questionnaires, but no observation or interviews were used. The present study also only focuses on the differences in perceptions of dual-career couples, based on biographical factors such as; gender, age, number of children (parental demands), race and age. Ideally all research should have a broad speck of people or participants, to ensure higher generalizability.

In an effort to deal with the limitations of the current study, the following are recommended, future research should use a large proportionate stratified random sample as this would allow the findings to be reliably generalised to the population. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative methodology would help to develop detailed understanding of dual-career couple's and their differences in perceptions of career barriers.

It is important for organisations to have continuous negotiations with employees in order to integrate the demands of the organisation and the career needs of its employees. Furthermore, they should respond to the shifting demographics by adopting voluntary policies such as

alternative work schedules and child and elder care assistance to help workers meet family needs, which in turn will be beneficial to the organisation by attracting and retaining the best talent.

**KEY WORDS:** Dual-career couples, Career barriers, Perceptions, Career development, Work-family conflict, Work-family balance Gender, Children (parental demands), Age group, Racial group.



## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this mini-thesis, 'Dual-career couples' perceptions of career barriers', is my original work. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references. I further declare that this thesis proposal has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for any other degree or equivalent qualification.

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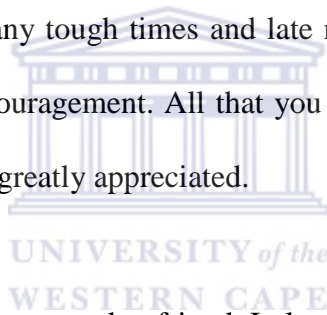
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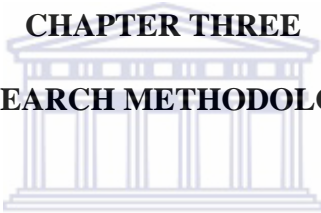
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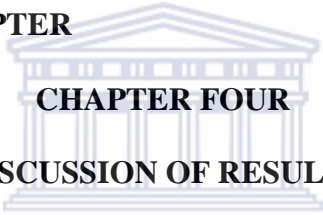
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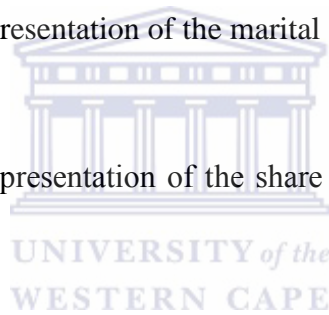
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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Organisations are experiencing profound changes in the demographics of the workforce. This is prevalent as organisations more often than not are encountering difficulties to retain talent due to the competitive nature of the economy and the dramatic increase in numbers of non-traditional employees (women, ethnic groups and racial minorities) in the workplace (Aluko, 2009). Furthermore, the perceptions of employees are also changing; both men and women are realising the significance of both work and family and finding the balance between the two (Theunissen, Van Vuuren & Visser, 2003). Catalyst's (1993 cited in Burke, 1997) view is that as a result of the change in the workforce, work-family issues have emerged as a high priority concern for both employees and their organisations.

Over the past two decades there has been an increase in the number of individuals with significant responsibilities both at work and with family, this is particularly true for dual-career couples (Carnicer, Sa'nchez, Pe'rez & Jime'nez, 2004). Approximately 40 years ago women were naturally given the responsibility of household chores and other family care responsibilities, whereas men were mainly concerned with instrumental tasks. It is clear that in the past an obvious division of labour existed, men providing for the needs of the family (mostly monetary provision), whilst women performed the role of care giver and controlling the home fronts. Currently thousands of women are entering the world of work, thus changing the way in which families are structured (Ugwu, 2009).

There are a variety of reasons why people choose to be in a dual-career situation. Greenhaus (1987 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) posits that this may be viewed as a means to obtain a higher standard of living and the need to customize a career path. It may also be due to the current economic situation or to develop their individual identities. Traditionally researchers view dual career and managerial employees as the employee groups who are most in need of the skills to develop a strategy for managing work-family roles (Kossek, Noe & DeMarr, 1999).

Kirrane and Monks (2004 cited in Grady & McCarthy, 2008) are of the opinion that as the participation of women in the labour force has increased, so too has the traditional roles of men and women changed within two-parent families resulting in the phenomenon of the dual-career couple. The increase in the dual-career couple phenomenon has heightened the pressure of managing multiple demands and may result in conflict arising from work to personal life and from personal life to work. According to Naidoo and Jano (2002), women are presented with the opportunity to pursue both career and family interests as a result of their dual-career lifestyle, yet it still brings about difficulties, tensions and challenges affecting the salience of these roles and how these roles become balanced and integrated in their lives.

Recent studies suggest that there are quite a lot of conflicts between work and family roles and cognisance have been taken of the fact that work and family integration has been and still is an immense obstacle for a countless number of professional women (Aluko, 2009). Over 140 published quantitative studies have been conducted on work-family conflict in the last 17 years (Ballout, 2008). The interest in understanding the work-family interface has been heightened due to these changes. Family and work domains generally interact and are

relevant to each other. Due to the overlap of these domains some individuals experience a high degree of conflict, whereas other people who have work and family roles, experience no conflict (Carnicer et al., 2004). Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict, such as when pressures from a person's work role are incompatible with pressures from the family role. This may, in turn, have an important effect on the quality of both work and family domains (Ballout, 2008).

Dual-career life style brings about three critical issues namely, career related issues, family system issues and individual issues. Career-related issues relate to the tendency for conflicts to occur between the needs of one spouse's/partner's career and the needs of the other. Family system issues involve the division of roles, the division of power, and marriage and family satisfaction. Individual issues refer to conflicts that relate to gender roles for each spouse/partner. Due to the fact that more and more women are entering the workforce, this has led to the need for change to occur in terms of partners roles (Spiker-Miller & Kees, 1995).

Marriages/cohabiting couples are interdependent in nature and therefore individual actions have a ripple effect for the couple and the family, which in turn brings about certain strains (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005). Gilbert (1993 cited in Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005) points out that the main problem that dual-career couple's face is finding an acceptable balance between their family and professional identities. The inability to maintain this balance may lead to individuals encountering barriers that interfere with the progress of their job or career plan. Spiker-Miller and Kees (1995) add that although such a lifestyle provides individuals with many economic and psychological benefits, it also creates many pressures and stresses. These factors largely influence the career barriers that dual-career couples face

when trying to advance their careers. Previous research posit that much of the success of the dual-career couples is due to their ability to move away from traditional norms and find creative solutions to the dilemmas inherent in the lifestyle.

There is a dearth of ‘traditional families’ as women are entering the workforce in large numbers, giving rise to a large number of dual-career couples. Dual-career couples have an implied psychological commitment to both their family and their individual careers (Smith, 1997). A multiplicity of problems and conflicts are experienced - demanding careers are combined with raising families (Russell, 1994). Dual-career couples are a prevalent and lasting phenomenon. Due to the increased participation of women and dual-career couples in the labour force and the changing views on partnership, both sexes should assess the new configuration in how they manage the often conflicting demands of work and family. Today women are increasingly dealing with career-related demands while maintaining their family roles, and men are becoming more involved in family roles. This is a clear illustration of how integral and inseparable the worlds of work and family have become, particularly for dual-career couples (Smith, 1997).

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

According to Theunissen et al. (2003), due to economic pressures of inflation and poverty more and more women are forced to take an active role outside the home and to pursue full-time careers. Gabarro (1992 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) posits that the current workforce is no longer solely focused on being competent and productive within the workplace, but is also required to provide adequate care for their families at home. During the past decade the number of women entering the workforce has grown rapidly, not only in the rest of the world, but in South Africa as well. Progressively women are no longer only performing the role of

nurturer, but also working for pay, thereby crossing the role boundary which has brought about significant challenges to many households. The reason for the increase change of family structure is due to the number of dual-career couples in contemporary families (Ugwu, 2009). The sudden boost in the number of families with two working spouses/partners has made traditional approaches to the harmonization of work and family lives unsuitable (Theunissen et al., 2003). Therefore, at present very few families reflect the traditional configuration of family as both partners are normally employed (Ugwu, 2009).

Dual-career couple's attitudes and behaviour differ significantly from established societal norms in careers, family and marriage, and gender roles, with important consequences for their employing organisations (Smith, 1997). O'Neil, Fishman and Kinsella-Shaw (1987 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) maintain that career, marriage, family, and gender role norms differ significantly from those of dual-career couple's behaviour. According to Mageni and Slabbert (2005), the current reality of today's labour force is that workers fulfil a number of roles and therefore have to juggle an assortment of activities, interests and relationships outside of work whilst striving to maintain the growing demand in the workplace, such as quality goods and services. It is therefore unavoidable that tensions will be transmitted from work to home and vice versa. According to Smith (1997), dual-career couples therefore warrant attention as a special group seeing as the career salience, strategies and transitions of one partner inevitably affects those of the other, which could also have repercussions for their employer. Dual career employee status has need of greater employer sensitivity and awareness of the demands of simultaneous careers in order to ensure that employees are to become more effective.

The amount of hours family members, both individually and in total are contributing to the paid workforce is greater than before - this does not only mean that both work and personal lives are under stress, but it also implies that it has changed in ways not anticipated by the assumptions, policies, and institutions that have previously shaped experiences in both work and family life (Aluko, 2009).

Dual-career couples carry out three main roles; that of homemaker, breadwinner and caregiver and for that reason experience a great deal of stress both at home and at work. The roles performed within a dual-career relationship change continuously and are equally demanding. The stress experienced by dual-career couples are more pronounced in today's world than what it was in the past. This is due to a number of reasons, such as dual-career couples cannot rely on their neighbours for help in child rearing as it was in the past, it can also be quite a struggle to gain social support since the current generation is turning into an ambitious generation (Ugwu, 2009). Work and family are inseparable, for that reason it is apparent that the future of work will be characterized by dual-career couples (Theunissen et al., 2003).

According to Brett, Stroh and Reilly (1992 cited in Kossek et al., 1999), almost fifty percent (50%) of managers in Fortune 500 companies are in dual career families. The importance of managing the integration of work and family demands is therefore quite a critical challenge confronting most employees and is an issue of growing importance.

Furthermore, very little rigorous research has been carried out on the career barriers that dual-career couples face. Most studies conducted have looked at work-life balance of dual-career couples because of the conundrums that achieving this balance can present to both

individuals and organisations. Studies have also focused on the problems dual-career couples face solely from the woman's perspective. This has highlighted a need for more rigorous research on this topic which would allow the researcher to look at dual-career couples not only from a female's perspective and to tap into their perceptions regarding career barriers in the workplace. The findings could help organisations realize the importance of assisting dual-career couples and how dual-career couples could improve their career development. To concur with Theunissen et al.'s view (2003), it is anticipated that this research will not only enrich the lives of dual-career couples, but it will also aid organisations in using employees in a more productive manner as it could assist in improving performance, retain employees, increase morale and reduce turnover .

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the current research is an attempt to understand the prevalence and impact of career barriers and the differences in perceptions amongst dual-career couples. The objectives of the research therefore address the following:

- To determine whether differences exist in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- To determine whether differences exist in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have and those who do not have children regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- To determine whether differences exist in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- To determine whether differences exist in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace.



## **1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

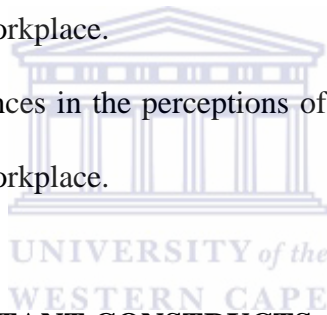
According to Sekaran (2001), a hypothesis is a logical conjectured relationship between two or more variables which is expressed in the form of a testable statement. Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace.

H2: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have and those who do not have children regarding career barriers in the workplace.

H3: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace.

H4: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace.



## **1.5 DEFINITIONS OF IMPORTANT CONSTRUCTS**

The following constructs are defined to facilitate the understanding of the various terminologies for the purpose of this research.

### **1.5.1 Dual-career couples**

A dual-career couple refers to a mixed-sex couple who is married or living together and who are both currently employed outside the home (Ugwu, 2009).

### **1.5.2 Perception**

The act of perceiving refers to the ability to have a mental grasp of objects or qualities. It involves neurological processes, by which recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli is

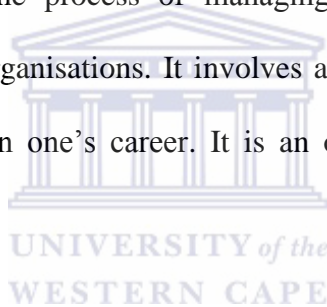
based primarily on memory. Hence, it is not based on fact, but rather on an individual's viewpoint (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2010).

### **1.5.3 Career**

A career is defined as a longer term developmental occupation or profession, with a sequence of connections and networks that span the course of a person's life; it includes lateral or downward career moves, as well as temporary withdrawals (Smith, 1997).

### **1.5.4 Career development**

Career development refers to the process of managing one's career either within one organisation or between many organisations. It involves attaining new skills and constantly improving oneself to help one in one's career. It is an ongoing, lifelong process (Career Development Help, 2006).



### **1.5.5 Career barriers**

Factors that interfere with the progress of an individual's job or career plan are referred to as career barriers. Both internal and external career barriers exist; external barriers are found in the environment and internal barriers are of a more psychological nature (Swanson & Tokar, 1991).

### **1.5.6 Work-family conflict**

Work-family conflict refers to a form of inter-role conflict where pressures from the work role are incompatible with pressures from the family role and this conflict may affect the quality of both work and family domains (Ballout, 2008).

### **1.5.7 The glass ceiling**

The glass ceiling can be defined as situations in which a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organisation is not allowed to advance due to either direct or indirect discrimination (Glass ceiling, 2010).

## **1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter the dependent variable and the aim of the research, which is to assess dual-career couples' perceptions of career barriers, is made known. This chapter also provides the background and motivation for the research. The objectives of the research were addressed and the hypotheses stated. The chapter concludes by briefly defining the important constructs referred to in the study. An overview of each chapter is provided below.

## **1.7 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

This mini-thesis comprises of five chapters, each having its unique contents and purpose:

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical foundation that provides the premise for the research by presenting an in-depth overview of the relevant literature pertaining to dual-career couples' perceptions regarding career barriers and why perceptions may differ. Additionally, it substantiates the research hypotheses for this particular study.

Chapter 3 provides an in depth discussion of the research design and methodology used to investigate the research problem. Specific reference is made to the data collection methods utilised, the design for the sample selection and size, as well as procedures followed to gather the data. The chapter also addresses the statistical properties and the data analyses techniques used to analyse the data.

Chapter 4 illustrates the research findings from the analysis of data collected during the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics are discussed.

Chapter 5 concludes the study by providing a discussion of the results originating from the current research. The discussion is integrated with the findings of other research conducted. Furthermore, limitations and practical implications of the research findings are accentuated and recommendations for future research are delineated.

The next section provides a theoretical framework of the variables under investigation.

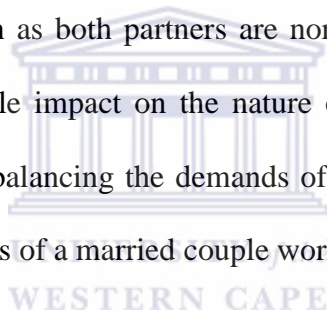


## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Today's families are fairly different to those of one or two generations ago. Approximately thirty-six (36) years ago a typical family consisted of a husband who worked outside the home, a wife who fulfilled the duties of homemaker and child-carer (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). This allowed men to devote themselves single mindedly to satisfying organisational requirements with the help of their partner, serving as a back-up person. Organisational views on careers were therefore based on the assumption that individuals would be able to devote themselves to the job without any other constraints (Burke, 1999). Today however, very few families reflect this configuration as both partners are normally employed. These changing demographics have a considerable impact on the nature of people's careers (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). The challenge of balancing the demands of work and the demands of family are amplified, when both members of a married couple work outside the home.



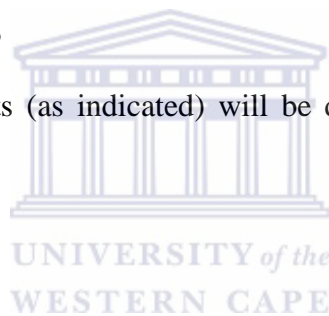
The dual-career couple phenomenon has added to the pressure of managing multiple demands and can lead to conflict from work to personal life and from personal life to work. Due to the changing nature of the workplace and adjustments people are required to make, organisations are starting to make a special effort to solve some problems of dual-career conflict (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). In general it is agreed that a good work or non-work balance is of vital importance for the economic feasibility of organisations and for the welfare of families (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

Dual-career couples have become the norm, however these couples continue to face stressors, strains, and strengths that may be different than those of one-career couples and single

persons (Viers, & Prouty, 2001). Therefore, this research endeavour is to focus on the career barriers dual-career couples' face. There are many predisposing factors that will influence or affect the career development of dual-career couples and dual-career couples' perceptions regarding career barriers in the workplace. Bearing this in mind, the ensuing literature review will view the South African legislation and the country's current workforce composition. It will also focus on the reasons for differing perceptions regarding career barriers amongst dual-career couples, what different career barriers dual-career couples face, how dual-career couples can improve their career development, how organisations can assist dual-career couples and how it will benefit organisations.

## **2.2 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

Some of the important constructs (as indicated) will be discussed in greater length in the literature review.

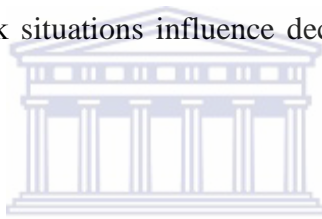


### **2.2.1 Dual-career couples**

The term 'dual-career couple' have been defined in a number of ways by various authors. A dual-career couple refers to a husband and wife, each of whom feels an emotional commitment to his or her family and to his or her own career, and whose work roles exhibit developmental sequences (Smith, 1992). In other words, the term dual-career couple relates to couples in which both spouses pursue an active career and family life simultaneously (Spiker-Miller & Kees, 1995). Dual-career couples have an implied psychological commitment to both their family and their individual careers (Smith, 1997). Elloy and Smith (2003) are of the opinion that dual-career relationships are deemed to be common in middle-class relationships, as it allows both partners an opportunity for maximizing both personal fulfilment and financial rewards. According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2006), any two people

in an ongoing, devoted relationship, where both partners are career-orientated and committed to a career, while at the same time maintaining a family life together, are referred to as a dual-career couple.

Dual-career couples may either work in the same organisation or in different organisations (Ugwu, 2009). The situation where both partners are employed and career-orientated and committed to a career, yet maintain a family life together, is referred to as dual-career couple (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Guterman in Muchinsky, Kriek and Schreuder (1998 cited in Theunissen, Van Vuuren & Visser, 2003) postulate that dual-career couples consist of two individuals who are both employed and who are committed to their relationship, with or without children and whose work situations influence decisions concerning their work and family life.



According to Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy (2001), a dual-career couple signifies a couple in which both partners have occupational responsibilities and career issues in the balance. Rosin (1990 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) defines dual-career status as a household in which both spouses/partners have a job that are personally salient, have a developmental sequence and need a high degree of commitment. Mackinnon's (1983 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) view is that in dual-career couples, women's employment is not on a temporary basis resulting from economic hardship; instead it is something which is encouraged and endorsed by the family as a desirable mode of self-fulfilment for the wife or female partner.

For the purposes of this study the term dual-career couple refers to mixed-sex couples who are either married or cohabiting and who are both currently employed outside the home.

### **2.2.2 Career**

In the past a career was defined as a series of jobs that follow a hierarchy of levels in terms of difficulty, responsibility and status (Graham, & Bennet, 1998). The term ‘career’ however, has evolved and is currently defined as any sequence of employment-related experiences. The meaning of ‘career’ has changed in order to suit the changing organisations (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). A career is defined as a longer term developmental occupation or profession, with a sequence of connections and networks that span the course of a person’s life; it includes lateral or downward career moves as well as temporary withdrawals (Smith, 1997). According to George and Jone (2005), all the work related experiences an individual has throughout their lifetime is known as a career. A career may include the number and various types of jobs a person has had, as well as the different organisations an individual has been employed by.



### **2.2.3 Career development**

Career development constitutes a systematic and successive sequence of behaviours and attitudes associated with work-related experiences which acknowledges an individual’s personal life over the entire span of the life cycle (White, Cox & Cooper, 1992). Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2000 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) and Zunker (2006) state that career development is an ongoing process, which according to Greenhaus et al., involves a series of stages that individuals progress through, each of which is characterised by a fairly unique set of issues, themes or tasks. In an article titled ‘Career development help’ (author unknown, 2006), career development is defined as the process of managing one’s career either within one organisation or between many organisations. Furthermore, it involves attaining new skills and constantly improving oneself to help in one’s career.



According to Gomez-Mejia et al. (2001), a career development's focal point is to develop enriched and more capable workers and it is therefore considered an ongoing and formalized effort. Career development focuses on more than just training; it involves a longer time-frame and a broader scope. The authors posit that in today's society career development involves active participation from employees in thinking through the possible directions their career can take.

Due to the emergence of dual-career couples in society, the meaning of career development requires a re-examination of the conceptualization thereof as decisions made by one partner almost always affect the other partner (Budworth, Enns & Rowbotham, 2008). Gradually more and more researchers are adopting a holistic approach to career development, recognizing that work and home lives are inextricably linked (Smith, 1997).

#### **2.2.4 Career barriers**

Factors that interfere with the progress of an individual's job or career plan are referred to as career barriers. Both internal and external career barriers exist; external barriers are found in the environment and internal barriers are of a more psychological nature (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). This construct will be explored in greater detail later in the literature review.

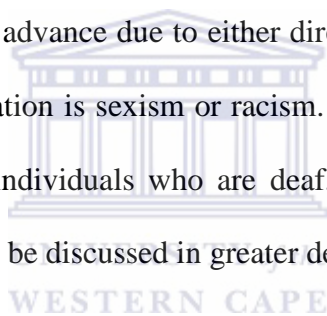
#### **2.2.5 Work-family conflict**

Work-family conflict refers to a form of inter-role conflict where pressures from the work role are incompatible with pressures from the family role and this conflict may affect the quality of both work and family domains (Ballout, 2008).

Ballout (2008) contends that work-family conflict also relates to three commonly used terms namely, spill over (when affective and cognitive roles and experiences are carried over from one domain of life into other domains), compensation (where roles are often thought to be counterbalanced in the work and non-work spheres of life) and segmentation (in which roles are often thought to be compartmentalized and experienced independently in work-non-work life domains). This construct will be addressed in greater detail further on in the literature review.

### **2.2.6 The glass ceiling**

Glass ceiling can be defined as a situation in which a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is not allowed to advance due to either direct or indirect discrimination. The most common form of discrimination is sexism or racism. However, more recently this may also affect the advancement of individuals who are deaf, blind, disabled and aged (Glass ceiling, 2010). This construct will be discussed in greater detail later.



## **2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLATION**

Over the past two decades South Africans have experienced major changes in the landscape of employment relations in organisations. Even though copious pieces of legislation have been put in place to achieve greater social justice, progress in redressing unfair discrimination in the workplace has been slow and complex (Booyesen, 2007).

A few years ago significant law reform efforts were initiated - The Labour Relations Act of 1995 (which took effect in 1996), the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 were implemented to achieve greater social justice and equality and to redress past unfair discrimination. This was followed by the Employment

Equity (EE) Act of 1999 (amended in 2004), which contained anti-discriminatory provisions, the Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999. The last two Acts took the focus away from Affirmative Action (AA) appointments to the recruitment, succession planning and development and training of persons in the designated groups (Africans, Coloureds and Indians, as well as women and people with disabilities) and also emphasised the emergent skills gap. Subsequently the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) was established (Booyesen, 2007).

When the South African government introduced the employment equity legislation their aim was to redress historical workplace discrimination. This meant that organisations that employed 50 or more people or those with specified financial turnovers were required to comply with such legislation (Thomas, 2003). Booyesen (2007a cited in April, Dreyer & Blass, 2007) argues that due to the South African Employment Equity Act 1988, the advancement of women to executive positions in South Africa can no longer be seen as choice but as a requirement. This legislation has tipped the balance to favour those individuals who were previously disadvantaged in respect of access to opportunities in the workplace. It also places pressure on organisations to fulfil the required quota.

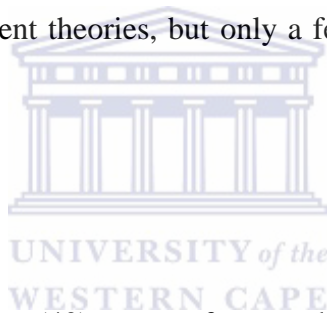
To address the issue of fairness and discrimination in the workplace various countries across the globe introduced legislative interventions such as equal employment opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) policies (Van Zyl & Roodt, 2003). Humphries and Grice (1995 cited in Van Zyl & Roodt, 2003) purport that regardless of the legislation introduced it seemed as though the inequality still continued. Mavin (2001 cited in Van Zyl & Roodt, 2003) argued that male career models and approaches did not change, yet women who took the time to meet family responsibilities, were being disadvantaged. Women were put in a

situation in which they were subtly forced to choose between upward movement in their careers and family stability or even a family at all. According to April et al. (2007), at this stage of South Africa's employment equity development, the glass ceiling is more an outcome of gender inequality than a cause.

Even though legislation is integral to addressing unfair workplace discrimination, it is merely the beginning of a process; holistic and supportive human resources practices are even more essential in the quest for workplace equity (Thomas, 2003).

## **2.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES**

There are many career development theories, but only a few will be highlighted in order to provide a context.



### **2.4.1 SUPER'S THEORY**

It took Super approximately forty (40) years of research to develop his views on career development. According to Super, career development is viewed as a process which includes five life stages from childhood to old age (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), Super elaborates on five psychological life stages, namely:

***Growth (birth to age 12 or 14)*** – In this phase children are in contact with adults who become their role models and based on their role models influences, they then formulate concepts of themselves. Their curiosity acts as a driving force for them to explore and experience the world in which they live in (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). During this phase children develop

capacity, interests, capacity and needs related with self-concept (Zunker, 2006). However, if these characteristics are not developed it may lead to feelings of alienation and helplessness in a world run by other people, with the chance that the individual may become either a drifter or conformist. Even though experience makes children more aware of their capacities and leads to their interests becoming more realistic, fantasy still nevertheless influences the development of interests (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

***Exploration (adolescences - ages 14 to 25)*** – This stage is characterised by a tentative phase in which choices are narrowed down but not finalised (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). During this phase individuals tend to move from tentative vocational preferences towards a specific vocational preference (Zunker, 2006). These choices may include part-time and holiday work and this is normally followed by pursuing the chosen field in order to gain greater depth of it. This may lead to choosing an alternative choice or it may result in the initial choice being pursued as a result of the inspiration or expectations of parents and other adults. When a choice is made so early in an individual's life it may result in a career crises at a later stage, as the individual may not be able to adjust to changes required due to being accustomed to seeing a career as encompassing 'an occupation' rather than as differing roles and directions (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

***Establishment (early adulthood - ages 25 to 45)*** – This phase is characterised by trial (during the individual's late twenties) and stabilisation (in the individual's thirties and early forties) through work experiences. The trial period involves a series of job changes before a final decision is made or before realising that one's career will consist of changes, whereas the stabilisation period prioritises security and advancement (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). During this time individuals complete the necessary training based on their vocational

preference and for entering employment (Zunker, 2006). If an individual is unsuccessful at finding stabilisation, it may cause frustration that could either lead to stagnation or change. For some people stabilising is not a priority as they thrive on change and their careers may consist of a series of trial periods. Super argues that both individuals who find stabilisation and those who prefer change are of the opinion that early adulthood are the best years of their life (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

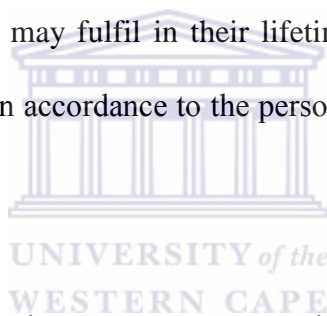
***Maintenance (middle adulthood - ages 45 to 64)*** – This phase is characterised by a continual adjustment process to consolidate work position and situation (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). During this period individuals focus on essential activities, developing skills, identifying development areas and accepting their limitations (Zunker, 2006). Generally most individuals continue along the established line in their work. Individuals who have not obtained what they wanted to, may possibly remain in the same position as previously and avoid being proactive in attaining new skills and knowledge. Other individuals may focus on obtaining additional goals, whereas others become innovators of change, similar to some individuals in the establishment phase (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

***Decline (old age - from 65)*** – The phase is characterised by pre-retirement considerations, work output and eventual retirement (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). As individuals become of age they tend to slow down by reducing the amount of hours worked and continuing with those things they still enjoy. People in this stage tend to start doing things they always wanted to do. They may also start to focus on a good retirement spot and developing non-occupational roles (Zunker, 2006). Depending on the individual and their situation retirement is viewed as a sense of loss, but alternatively, it could be seen as an opportunity to make new choices (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

Even though Super's theory was formulated based on the above five stages, he stresses that no two individuals will develop in the exact same manner. Therefore, the life stages provide individuals with an indication and an approximate age (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

#### **2.4.1.1 The Life-Career Rainbow**

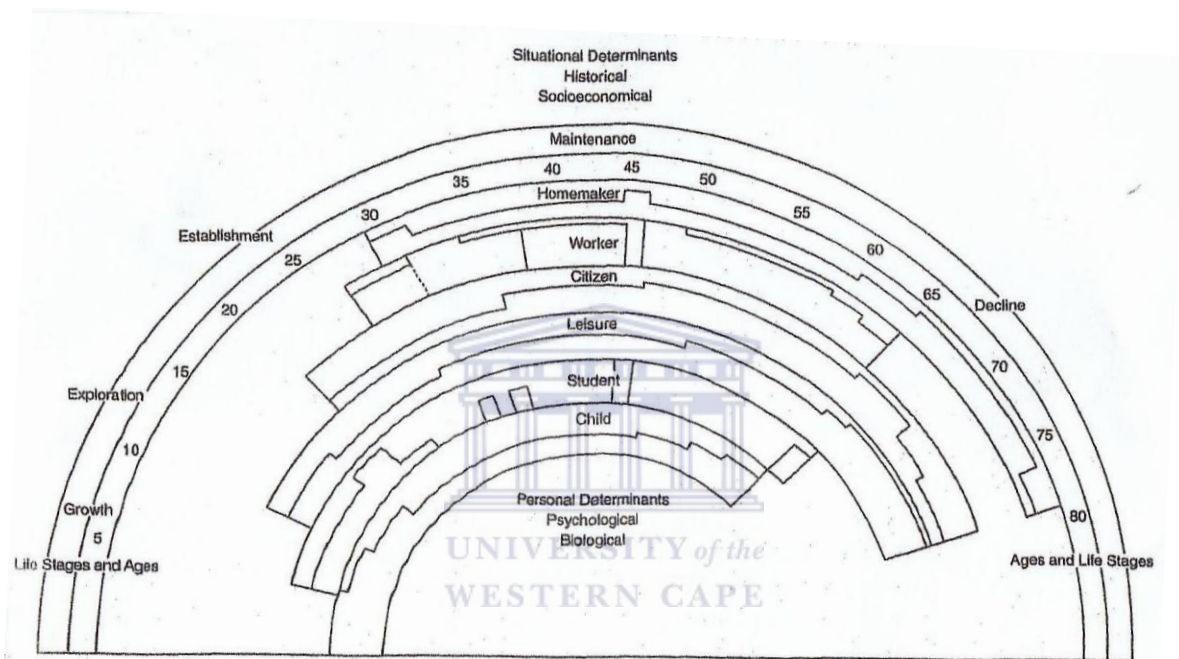
The five life stages and the estimated ages at which it will occur are depicted by the outer bands of the Life-career rainbow (Refer to figure 2.1 on page 13). The inner bands are labelled: homemaker, worker, citizen, leisurite, student and child, each representing one of the six life roles that individuals may fulfil in their lifetime. The significance of each role may vary from person to person in accordance to the person's relevant life stage (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).



The life-career rainbow can be used as an assessment tool to determine the significance of a given role to an individual (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Blustein (1997 cited in Super's Life-Space Theory, n.d.) states that the "rainbow" provides a way of encouraging individuals to discover solutions for themselves and to consider how various social roles may intersect throughout one's life span. The author contends that individuals can do so by using the rainbow to plot their past and current life-role activities. They can talk about the values they would like to express in each life role and their level of satisfaction within their current activities. The "rainbow" can also be utilised to clarify future scenarios once a person identifies future life roles in which they hope to participate and the values they hope to express in each future life role. Additionally, the rainbow also points out how certain personal (for example needs, values and interests) and situational determinants (for example

community, school, and social policies) influence when and how people play particular life roles. This would therefore allow a person to discuss how these determinants influence their current and, potentially, their future life-role participation (Super's Life Space Theory, n.d.).

**FIGURE 2.1: The life-career rainbow – nine life roles in schematic life space**



(Zunker, 2006, p. 60).

#### 2.4.1.2 The Segmental Model

The Segmental Model (figure 2 on page 15) is representative of a career in the form of an architectural structure which consists of building blocks and the way in which it is put together determines the form it takes. The arch is representative of the interactions between the two columns. The keystone labelled 'self' includes an individual's role of self-concepts in the development stages and also includes personality and environmental determinants. The

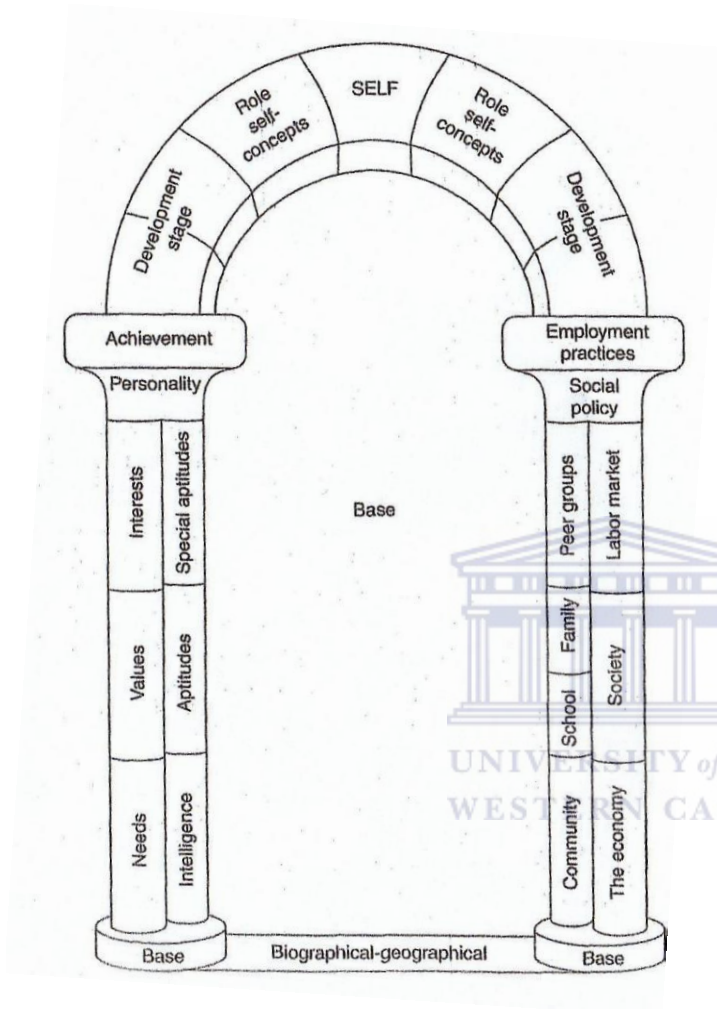


development stage block on the right column represent adulthood old age, whereas the development block on the left column include childhood and adolescence (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), the step at the entrance of the Segmental Model is labelled 'biological-geographical', which is representative of the foundations of development. The segments form two columns each of which has a base which is essential for development namely, personality variables and environmental variables; due to the individual's interaction of the two, the personality variables develop. This causes the foundations of personality to grow into needs, which creates values, which causes interests to develop. Furthermore, an individual's interaction with the environment also develops intelligence and forms specific aptitudes such as spatial, verbal and numerical aptitudes which then leads to special aptitudes. All these variables come together to represent an analogy for personality as a whole and this influences the individual's achievements. Super (1992 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) hypothesises that the top sections of the column namely, interests and special aptitudes, have more predictive value for career choice than the bottom segments, as the top segments are influenced more by the interaction with the environment than the bottom segments.

Super (1992 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) puts forth that the right hand side column includes environmental variables, which interacts with personality variables and results in particular environmental determinants of a career. Schooling, family life, structure and peer group is determined by the community and economy which has an effect on society, which in turn affects the labour market. All these variables come together to represent an analogy to social policy as a whole and influences employment practices.

**FIGURE 2.2: A segmental model of career development**



(Zunker, 2006, p. 59)

## 2.4.2 LEVINSON'S THEORY

Levinson's theory focuses on life stages pertaining to the timing of relationships and family events (Levinson, 1978 cited in White, Cox & Cooper 1992). Levinson (1978) identified eight periods of the adult's life cycle, namely:

- *The early adult transition: Moving from pre to early adulthood* – this stage includes individuals between the ages of 17 and approximately 22. Two major things happen

during this phase. Firstly, individuals move out of the pre-adult world and question their place in it and secondly, take their first or introductory steps into the adult world and explore its possibilities. This phase may therefore include completing high school, separation from the family and entry into a tertiary institution.

- ***The first adult life structure: Entering the adult world*** – this stage includes individuals from approximately age 22 to age 28. During this phase individuals try out different occupations, relationships and values. The stage has two opposing tasks, namely, to explore the possibility of adult living and to create a stable life structure.
- ***The age thirty transition: Changing the first life structure*** - this stage includes people from approximately age 28 to 33 and permit individuals to work on their development areas (weaknesses/limitations) in the first and second life structures. This phase builds directly on the past and is representative of change.
- ***The second adult life structure: Settling down*** – this phase range from the ages of 33 to 40 years. During this period the individual focus on work, family, friendships, leisure and try to realise their aspirations as a youth. This period involves two main tasks. Firstly, to establish a place in society by growing in a chosen field and becoming a valued member of society and secondly, to advance and progress by working towards a time frame.
- ***The mid-life transition: Moving from early to middle adulthood*** – the mid-life transition occurs during the age of 45 and spans from early to middle adulthood. During this phase individuals' introspect. Some individuals are untroubled by the

value and direction of their lives and therefore do not question much, others however, realize that their lives are changing and the process is not a painful one.

- ***Entering middle adulthood: Building a new life structure*** – at the age of 45 the mid-life transition ends and the building of a new life structure begins between the ages of 45 to 50. This period marks a series of changes rather than one dramatic event.
- ***Subsequent periods in middle adulthood - Age 50: Mid-life transition*** – begins at the age of 50. The life structures created during the mid-life transition are adjusted. It is not conceivable to get through middle adulthood without a boundary in either the mid-life transition or the age fifty transition.

**Age 55 to 60 transition** – this phase is devoted to building a second middle adult structure and this time is used for rejuvenation and fulfilment.

- ***Age 60 to 65 transition: Late adult transition*** – this phase creates the foundation for late adulthood. It is a time of significant development and presents a major turning point in the life cycle. According to Levinson's theory, every phase makes an essential contribution to the life cycle and brings about opportunities to develop and create a life more suitable to the self.

### **2.3 GOTTFREDSON'S THEORY OF OCCUPATIONAL CIRCUMSCRIPTION AND COMPROMISE**

According to Stead and Watson (1999), this theory places emphasis on certain factors such as intelligence, socio-economic status, gender and race and how it affects peoples' career development from early on in their lives.

According to Gottfredson (1981), career choice has a developmental path. Career choice evolves within an individual as they grow up in their family and society and socialization has a limiting effect in determining career choices. According to the theory, career choice is self-expressive and therefore the theory focuses on the origins and boundaries of an individual's self-concept, their image of who they are, privately and inwardly as well as outwardly in relation to others, and proposes that career selection is based to a large extent on social identity. Social identity is organized across three main areas namely, masculinity/femininity, personal interest and prestige.

The processes of socialization and cultural learning begins very early in life to create a person's ideas about who has what kind of power in the world, and what work is typically done by men and women. Young children tend to pick up an attitude of respect or of dismissal of categories of people and jobs, depending on what is modelled by adults in their life so that cultural socialization determines what children accept as appropriate sex-type behaviour and which professions are seen as having prestige. Personal interests are important but they are promoted or discouraged within culturally tolerable boundaries on the basis of the first two categories. Reality testing and available opportunities suggest what career possibilities are seen as accessible (Gottfredson, 1981).

According to Gottfredson (1981), many individuals enter the workforce unaware of the degree to which they have been driven by these historical and societal influences. As a result, when they reach a plateau or an impasse in their career they may suddenly feel adrift and wonder how they got to that place. They may suddenly doubt the wisdom or appropriateness of their career choice and there may be good reasons why the original pathway now feels

overly constraining or "circumscribed". Life circumstances may have widened their field of vision beyond the constraints that were imposed upon it when they entered the workforce. They may now find that they live in a world which has moved towards broader and more inclusive definitions of appropriate sex-type work. For other individuals it may happen that having achieved the sought after "prestige", individuals still find themselves unsatisfied on a deeper level. It is at these points that career development and personal development can coincide and in the face of a larger field of choices and a more developed set of skills, a new challenge or a new direction may be chosen to healthily reorient the next part of their working life.

## **2.5 THE CURRENT WORKFORCE COMPOSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The South African democratic election in April 1994 had a significant impact on the composition of the labour force. South Africa's current workforce has changed dramatically over the past sixteen years as it includes more women, it is more representative of the country as a whole due to the participation of all races and the number of working couples have also grown. Both nationally and internationally the general trend is that the majority of the new entrants into the job market are females and the majority of families are in a dual-career (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Bachelor and Hare-Mustin (1994; 1978 cited in Viers, & Prouty, 2001) delineate that the growth in the number of women entering into the labour force was deemed to be one of the most fundamental changes in social structure in the twentieth century.

Approximately seven years ago South Africa's population consisted of roughly 46 million people; which comprised of 76.6% African, 11.3% White, 8.3% Coloured and 2.4% Indian, of which 52% were estimated to be female (Thomas, 2003).

In 1994 the socio-political reform was officially put into effect in the country however, very few changes were made in terms of the workplace demographics, with White males still commanding the majority of management positions. Three years later ninety-three percent (93%) of top managerial positions in South African companies were still occupied by Whites. A while thereafter another study was conducted where findings indicated that Whites occupied eighty-seven percent (87%) private sector management positions, ninety-three percent (93%) executive management positions and ninety-two percent (92%) senior management positions. It also revealed that only six percent (6%) of all managers were African and only fourteen percent (14%) of managers were women,

In 1998 research showed that Black employees comprised eleven percent (11%) of senior management structures, of which one percent (1%) comprised of Black women. A year later it was reported that White men and women still occupied the vast majority (84%) of management positions. A survey in 2001 publicized some progress appeared to have been made since 1998 at top and senior management levels in that Black and female representation in these positions had increased from 11.0% and 14.0% in 1998 to 31.0% and 33.5% in 2001, respectively (Thomas, 2003).

Over the past few years, major changes have been witnessed in labour force characteristics. Of particular significance has been the stable increase of women in the paid workforce (Elloy & Smith, 2003). Regardless of the steps South Africa has taken to ensure that women advance in their workplaces, studies report that women are still however, underrepresented in corporate boardrooms (Thomas, 2003).

According to Stats SA's 2007 mid-year estimates, the South African population consists of approximately 47.9 million people, of whom approximately 24.3 million (51%) are female. When the first survey was conducted in 2001 by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the results indicated that a higher unemployment rate existed amongst women, compared to men. The most recent data which was recorded in the September 2006 indicates an official unemployment rate of 21.2% for men, compared to 30.7% among women. A preliminary review of the official data suggests that progress has been made, largely due to South Africa's new democratic order (*Lehohla, 2007*).

According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), many socio-demographic changes have taken place in the composition of the workforce and the nature of work itself, in South Africa as in other countries. Throughout the last few years, and especially since the 1994 election, there has been an increase in the number of working women, dual-career couples, single parents and fathers in the workforce. Naidoo and Jano (2002), also contend that the shifting economic and social circumstances have resulted in more married women engaging in paid employment outside the home. This type of restructuring of personal relationships has given rise to the surfacing of dual-career couples.

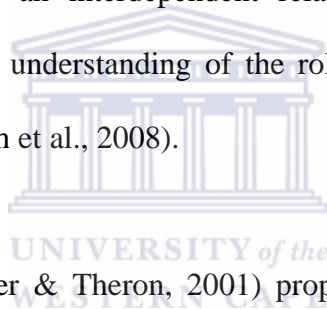
## **2.6 THE NATURE OF DUAL-CAREER COUPLES**

The changing status of women in society in the last half of the twentieth century has been the main reason for the creation of the dramatic reconfiguration of the traditional families. Traditional family structures, gender role prescriptions, and the division of domestic labour have been extensively impacted by the shifting economic and social circumstances and trends. More and more married women began to engage in paid employment outside the



home. This type of restructuring of personal relationships has given rise to the surfacing of dual-career couples (Naidoo & Jano, 2002).

The dual-career relationship demonstrates the complex interaction of career and gender roles in modern society (Elloy & Smith, 2003). When both members in a committed relationship have a career, personal lives can be complicated and become intertwined with individuals occupational lives (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2001). Individuals in dual-career relationships' role identities are largely shaped by their interactions with each other. When an individual is part of a couple, the role identity of 'worker' may take on a different meaning or position than if the individual was not part of an interdependent relationship. Partners in dual-career relationships develop a common understanding of the role behaviours of the unit through role-taking interactions (Budworth et al., 2008).

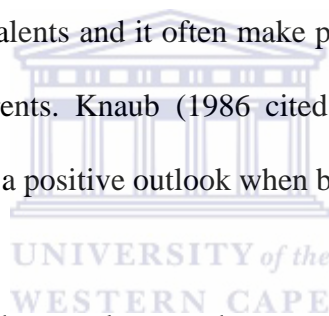


Gilbert (1994 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) proposes that there are three general patterns for dual-career couples namely, conventional, modern and role sharing patterns. When both partners are committed to their careers and the woman still fulfils most of the responsibilities for the children and household, this is referred to as the *conventional pattern*. The *modern pattern* refers to when both partners take responsibility for the children, however the woman is solely responsible for the household. The *role sharing pattern* is when both partners are actively involved in both childcare and household responsibilities whilst pursuing their careers.

Papp (2000 cited in Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005) postulates that time and responsibility are important factors to take into account when trying to understand how couples give meaning to the fit between work and family roles. Gilbert (1993 cited in Bird & Schnurman-

Crook, 2005) proposes that generally both partners in dual-career relationships have high expectations for performing professional and family duties, therefore spouses/partners in all likelihood act jointly to accommodate stressors. Pasley, Kerpelman and Guilbert (2001 cited in Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005) suggest that these actions are representative of the couple's interdependence and adds to the image that each partner has of themselves and the other person.

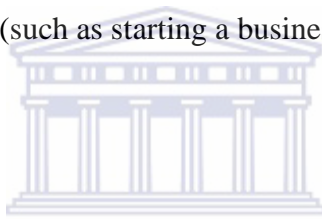
Marshall and Barnett (1993 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) also acknowledge that regardless of the many disadvantages attached to being part of a dual-career couple, there are also many benefits; many dual-career couples believe that by combining work and family roles it allows them to use their talents and it often make people with children feel as though in doing so, they are better parents. Knaub (1986 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) affirms that children tend to have a positive outlook when both parents are working.



There are a number of reasons why people may choose to be part of a dual-career situation. Greenhaus (1987 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) suggests that the reason may be due to the need for a higher living standard and the need to customize a career path. Hertz (1986 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) proposes that self-efficacy may be the main reason for both partners engaging in a career. Muchinsky et al. (1998 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) delineates that dual-career couples have many benefits such as, a higher income (due to both partners working), the opportunity to develop beyond gender-role stereotypes and having equal power. Rosin (1990 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) posits it also benefits both partners as a result of the increased income, it also gives them the opportunity to develop themselves beyond sex-role stereotype and it allows partners to be part of an intimate relationship on an

equal basis by sharing power and initiative (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

The results of a study conducted reflected that men agreed that there are personal and relational advantages to having dual careers, such as the fact that it reflects similarities in the partner's beliefs and expectations and reinforces identity commitment. Another benefit solely mentioned by the male participants was the financial benefits of dual employment (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005). Similarly, in another study (Rosin 1990 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) findings also indicated that men are of the opinion that their dual-career status allows them greater autonomy as they are no longer solely responsible for the finance and therefore are able to take chances (such as starting a business).

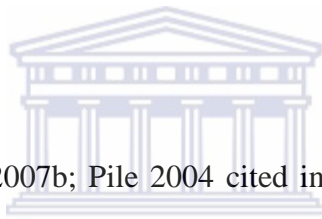


## **2.7 WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

The interest in work-life balance began due to the emphasis placed on conflict between work and family roles (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Work-life balance is an area of research that investigates whether the satisfaction that an individual experiences at work is in part affected by the satisfaction the individual experiences in non-work and vice versa (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Work-life balance is broadly defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. There are numerous definitions for work-life balance, however it is essentially concerned with an equilibrium or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. In the past work-life balance purely looked at whether people spent equal amounts of time on work and non-work roles. In recent times it is considered to be more complex than that by focusing on three aspects namely, time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance. *Time balance* refers to the amount of time given to work and non-work roles. *Involvement balance* looks at the level of psychological involvement in,

or commitment to work and non-work roles. *Satisfaction balance* refers to the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles (The Case for Work/Life Balance, 2005).

Various authors (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Wayne et al., 2004 cited in Grady & McCarthy, 2008) maintain that when an individual balances the demands for commitment of resources to one role, such as their career, it leads to fewer resources being devoted to the other role. According to Grady and McCarthy (2008), two main schools of thought exist regarding the integration of work and personal life domains. The first school of thought states that the relationship between domains are conflict-oriented and the second school of thought is of the opinion that the integration between and across domains can be facilitative with positive spill-over in operation.



A number of authors (Booyesen 2007b; Pile 2004 cited in April et al., 2007) point out that numerous research conducted in Canada and United Kingdom suggests that work-life balance impacts on organisational retention of female executives. Due to the societal pressures in South Africa the impact of work-life balance on career decisions are likely to be even greater in South Africa around women's role in child rearing.

According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), everybody's idea of career success differs. Schein (1993 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) posits individuals tend to place more value on having a balanced life and success is more often than not, not only characterised by the individual's work contributions but also by their contribution to family, community and self. Hall and Mirvis (1995 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) came across a survey conducted in the United States of America in 1995 where the findings indicated that sixty percent (60%) of the citizens consider personal and family life important factors when making employee decisions. Cascio (2001 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) is of the

opinion that most employees try to attain a balance between work and leisure and more flexibility in terms of where, when and how they work.

Furthermore, various roles (homemaker, bill payer, nurturer, etcetera.) should also be examined and couples should find ways to manage their stress (Theunissen et al., 2003). Guterman (1991 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) hypothesises that couples can manage daily life by changing the nature of the different roles in such a way that both partners are capable of doing what needs to be done and taking responsibility for managing one's own stress.

Brink and De la Rey (2001 cited in Potgieter & Barnard, 2010) posit that the South African socio-economic, political and societal circumstances will influence employees' experiences regarding work-life balance differently to that of employees in other countries. Due to the implementation of the Employment Equity Act in South Africa, individuals from previously disadvantaged and historically excluded groups have increasingly become part of the workforce and are subject to influences of westernisation, potentially transforming traditional and culture-specific family roles.

## **2.8 WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT**

Work-family conflict occurs when one role is incompatible with another (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985 cited in Mostert, 2008) maintain that work-family conflict refers to when the participation in an individual's work role is made more difficult due to the participation in the family role and vice versa.

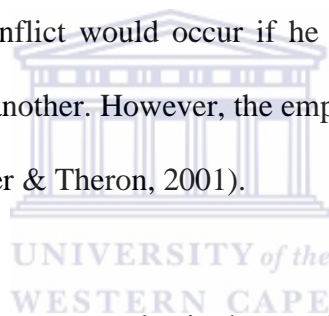
Schreuder and Theron (2001 cited in Mostert, 2008) contend that because of the socio-demographic changes that have taken place in the composition of the South African workforce and the nature of work itself in other countries, the integration between work and family domains became more difficult. During the last few years and especially since the 1994 election, there has been a growth in the number of women in the labour force, dual-career couples, single parents and fathers who are actively involved in parenting.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) identified three main types of work family conflict namely, time based conflict, strain-based conflict and behaviour-based conflict. *Time-based conflict* occurs when time is devoted to one role (for instance work) it makes it difficult to participate in the other roles (such as family life and responsibilities) (Ballout, 2008; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985 cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001). The dual-career couples time is fought for by work and family roles as time that is dedicated to one role cannot be devoted to another role. When a comparison was made between the work and family domains as a source of work-family conflicts, it was however, found that work domain was not a significantly greater source of conflict for either men or women than the family domain and vice versa (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Wiermsa (1994 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) posits that research conducted reveals that dual-career couples have to cope with time-based issues of role quality, role overload and psychological issues. According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), employees who are subjected to condition of inflexible work schedules and work pressures that make it impossible to meet family demands, usually experience time-based conflict.

*Strain-based conflict* takes place when strain experienced in one role intrudes into or interferes with participation in another role (Ballout, 2008; Mostert, 2008). Role overload,

role conflict and ambiguity, lack of career progress, changing working environments, repetitive tasks, long hours, unexciting tasks, lack of work challenge, a new job or poor job-person fit are all work stressors which are identified as strain-based conflict (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

Lastly, *behaviour-based conflict* occurs when specific behaviours required in one role are inappropriate in another role (Ballout, 2008). Sometimes certain patterns of behaviour are in conflict with the expected behaviour of another role. An example of this would be a male manager is required to be self-reliant, somewhat aggressive, yet objective and emotionally stable while at work however, when he is at home, his family expects him to be a caring, warm and emotional person. Conflict would occur if he is unable to adjust his behaviour when changing from one role to another. However, the empirical research on such behaviour-based strain is lacking (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).



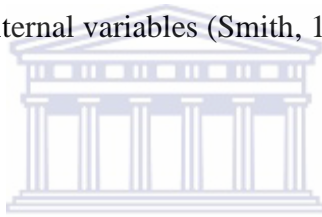
The greatest challenge for dual-career couples is the number of roles they have to manage. These roles may include being a wife, husband or partner, careerist, parent, self and friend. Often the demands of one role make it hard to meet the demands of the other role. This may result in individuals experiencing conflict between roles they presume they have to perform and the roles they are expected to carry out. Work-family conflict is therefore to be anticipated among dual-career couples (Schreuder & Theron, 2001).

## **2.9 CAREER BARRIERS**

Career barriers explain the disparity between the abilities of dual-career partners and their achievements. Individuals, who encounter career barriers whilst making an effort towards achieving occupational aspirations, may result in goals being compromised. Dual-career

couples may be prone to role pressure; this refers to when the requirements of one role makes performance of the other role more difficult so that commitment to succeed in one role may heighten the concern for succeeding in another role (Ballout, 2008).

Gilbert (1993 cited in Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005) hypothesizes that a common problem for dual-career couples is finding a suitable balance between equally valued family and professional identities. Guelzow and Bird (1995 cited in Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005) conjecture that when dual-career partners take corrective steps to resolve threats to family identity, it frequently results in disruptions to professional identity. This may be the root from which the majority of dual-career couples' career barriers stem. Dual-career development is influenced by both internal and external variables (Smith, 1997).



## **2.9.1 INTERNAL BARRIERS**

Internal barriers describe internal conflicts (for example, motivation, and self-concept) that impede an individual's career progress (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). The internal barriers applicable to this research are discussed below:

### **2.9.1.1 Work/family issues**

In the past husbands of working women viewed their marriage less positively than those who were married to non-working women. This resulted in divorce and separation to be more common in dual-career households. For this reason women's involvement in the workforce was seen as a potential threat to the family (Viers & Prouty, 2001).



Research makes it apparent that family and work are intertwined; most dual-career couples' stated that they were more likely to allow work to interfere with their family responsibilities than their relationship responsibilities to interfere with work (Viers & Prouty, 2001).

Puckrin (1990 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) states that work and home interface creates a great deal of conflict for woman in dual-career relationships because of the different role expectations and demands on her time. It is therefore not surprising that dual-career women suffer from role conflict and role overload. According to Naidoo and Jano (2002), research has shown that women compartmentalise work and home lives in order to manage the conflict between work and family roles. This is often done through careful planning or by physically distancing work from home (that is, working late at the office to avoid taking work home). Hall (1972 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) views this approach of coping with role conflict as dysfunctional.

Regardless of whether dual-career partners work at the same or different organisations, they are faced with multiple role conflicts that arise as a result of the work and home domains (Ugwu, 2009). Howard (1992 cited in Ugwu, 2009) emphasizes that dual-career couples take responsibility for an array of roles and they are therefore prone to stress and burnout. Greenhaus et al. (2000 cited in Theunissen et al., 2003) found that dual-career couples are more likely to compete with each other than traditional couples. If the female partner is more successful, the male partner tends to feel threatened and this may result in feelings of resentment. It is thus vital to acknowledge that competition and jealousy can threaten the stability of a marriage or relationship and lead to a breakdown in communication as partners become reluctant to talk about job-related issues with their partners. The key issue in a dual-career relationship is the challenge to create and maintain a balance between work and

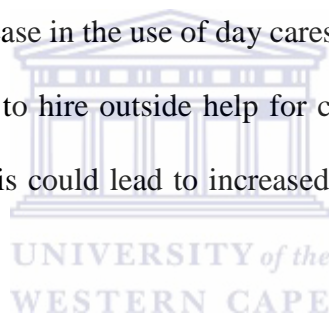
family. If couples are unable to maintain this balance it may lead to marital or relationship dissatisfaction, which in turn is a materialization of work-family conflict.

Hall and Mirvis (1995 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) argue that individuals who strive for a balance between their family and work roles create a challenge for organisations.

Work-family issues are seen as something which affects the company's competitiveness and is therefore a problem for both employees and organisations alike.

### **2.9.1.2 Concerns over home and childcare**

It is common that when both partners work child care becomes a critical issue. Due to this research has shown a steady increase in the use of day cares (Zunker, 2006). Even though it is common for dual-career couples to hire outside help for child care and housework, couples are generally not satisfied and this could lead to increased workload stress (Viers & Prouty, 2001).

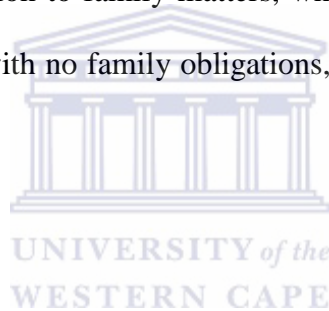


According to Zunker (2006), most parents concerns are about how placing their children in day care would impact their children negatively. It is therefore important for parents to ensure that their children are placed in a nurturing environment, with people who are trained and emotionally able to establish relationships. Parents perceptions, especially mothers perceptions regarding the childcare facility their children are placed in is vital, as it could affect their work.

Parents often experience emotional trauma due to leaving their child or children with strangers (childcare) and this leads to stress and anxiety, which results in a decrease in their productivity. When parents are not satisfied with their current child care situation, it may lead

to absenteeism, tardiness, and lower morale as well as low productivity. When parents are unable to find a more suitable child care arrangement it may cause one parent to quit causing higher turnover and training costs for the employer. As a result, this may lead to his or her career growth being retarded, since productivity and reliability are weighted heavily in determining promotions (Bryant & Kleiner, 1989).

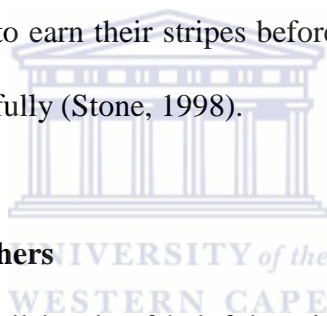
Andam, Dawson, Horton and Sandow (2005) found that as in most careers, careers in research or academia require continuity, yet some women take a break from their careers for one or more years in order to have babies. It is thus apparent that women may pause or slow down their careers to give attention to family matters, which may result in them advancing much more slowly than people with no family obligations, and this may in turn, hinder their career progression.



According to Stone (1998), men who view their families as priority experience problems within their workplace, with both the organisation and co-workers. Devoted fathers often irritate their colleagues, especially those colleagues who do not have children, as these co-workers expect them to put their jobs first. The higher or more senior a man's position within the company, the more conflicts he will experience between work and home pressures. According to Bach (2005), some evidence indicates that working fathers are becoming more actively involved in parenting and housework. Regardless of this most research however, indicates that the gender balance in unpaid work remains unequal, as women continue to play a greater role than men. A study indicated that full-time working mothers spend double the average time a father would spend on childcare and household responsibilities.

Research shows that important differences are apparent between spouses/partners when couples have children (Smith, 1997). Studies show that working mothers spend approximately 80 hours at work on childcare and on household chores, while working fathers spend on average 50 hours per week on the same activities. Women tend to feel guilty for placing their careers before their children, for not finding sufficient time for household chores, and not being able to take time off to care for sick children (Russell, 1994).

Companies generally view having a family as a ‘problem’. Organisations are content with the idea of employees having a family or keeping photos of them at your desk, as long as it does not interfere with their billable hours. Organisations admonish that when employees have children, they expect employees to earn their stripes before enjoying the luxury of attending to their childcare responsibilities fully (Stone, 1998).



### **2.9.1.3 Limited support from others**

Job social support refers to overall levels of helpful social interaction available on the job from co-workers and supervisors and it plays a role in the career progression of dual-career couples. In most cases, job social support may buffer harmful effects of high-strain jobs and the negative effects of work-stressors on work-related outcomes. Social support can be provided by supervisors in the form of career guidance and information, learning opportunities and challenging work assignments that promote career advancement. Three main suggested categories of job social support have been identified namely, personal, peer, and network (Ballout, 2008).

Dual-career couples tend to have fewer networks of family and friends. This may be due to the fact that men in dual-career couples often have jobs that restrict their social life and cause

them to travel or relocate, reducing the amount of time they have to interact with friends and family. Dual-career couples are also often viewed as couples who are unable to maintain strong social networks as a result of time constraints and work overload (Viers & Prouty, 2001).

There are a number of things that may be viewed as social support, such as help given to the individual, taking time to listen and by making the person's work load or responsibilities easier to cope with (Fields, 2002). When a husband or male partner takes his wife's or female partner's career seriously, is proud of her occupational achievements and displays a general attitude of supportiveness, the couple may have a higher level of marital or relationship quality. When both spouses/partners are equally involved in the household's day-to-day domestic activities and both parties are committed to the growth of the marriage or relationship, it also lightens the load that both parties have to fulfil (Smit, 2001). Research shows that spouses/partners who work long hours or who engage in frequent business travel are not physically available to help out at home, which often heightens their partner's stress of managing work and family life. This may result in the absent spouse/partner trying to compensate for his/her absence by participating more in family affairs when he or she is at home (Steward & Donald, 2006). When an employee receives sufficient social support from their spouse/partner, family, friends, co-workers and supervisors, it makes it easier for them to cope with their various tasks, hence resulting in a work-life balance and reducing the career barriers they encounter (Smit, 2001).

Leavy (1983 cited in Ugwu, 2009) posits that the information dual-career couples share with their social support (family, friends, husbands, and church) could possibly encourage positive coping or it may have an irregular effect on coping. Rice (1998 cited in Ugwu, 2009) asserts

that the quality of support is more important than the quantity of support received. These findings are based on evidence confirmed by people with extensive, but poor-quality support, as they report feeling lonely more frequently than people with less, but high-quality support. Kirkham, Schilling, Norelius and Schinke (1986 cited in Ugwu, 2009) suggest that social support allows caregivers the opportunity to share the stress of care giving roles with their friends. Ugwu (2009) claims that social support and the chance to exchange information reduces feelings of emotional turmoil that goes with being a caregiver.

#### **2.9.1.4 Primacy of the partner's career**

The presence of two careers in one family result in more complex career development processes as decisions made by one individual almost certainly affect the career path of the other (Budworth et al., 2008). Dual-career couples function as social systems therefore the interest of both partners as well as family inputs are critical to career decisions (Smith, 1997).

Spouses/partners also play a vital role in influencing the career decisions of the other, it may be connected to themes such as inter or intra organisational mobility or general career issues outside of relocation, inter alia decisions about when to have children or whether to accept promotion responsibilities (Richardson, 2006). While pursuing their careers either member of the couple must consult the other on issues such as number of hours spent at work and relocations (Budworth et al., 2008). Generally if one partner is required to relocate, it has a huge impact on the other partner as his or her career development may be limited or nullified (Smith, 1997).

Therefore the dual-career employee has less discretion over career development than members of traditional families wherein only one partner is in the paid workforce.

Consequently, partners of dual-career couples are likely to exhibit compromise when making career decisions, attributable to balancing individual preferences with those of the partner as stakeholder (Smith, 1997). Some partners in dual-career relationships have on occasion been forced to change career directions because of marriage and/or family responsibilities (Elloy & Smith, 2003).

In a study conducted which included dual-career couples, 66% of the men and 75% of the women indicated that they believed in equality in their marriages. The study further indicated that wife's careers would be sacrificed for their husband's if need be. Such point of views has serious repercussions for women insofar as they will probably turn down promotional opportunities or decline relocation if the impact on their husband's career might be negative (Russell, 1994).

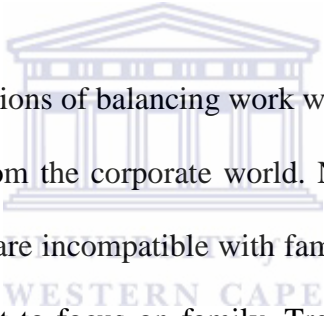


### **2.9.1.5 Multiple-role conflict**

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and Snoeck (1964 cited in Ugwu, 2009) assert that multiple role stress is caused when meeting demands of one role gets in the way of meeting demands of another role. According to Zunker (2006), in the case of dual-career couples conflict would exist between family and work roles. Maclean, Glynn and Ansara (2004 cited in Ugwu, 2009) posit that because dual-career couples cover countless roles (family responsibilities and work responsibilities), they may experience multiple role stress which if not properly managed, may lead to role strain.

According to Stone (1998), dual-career couples face a myriad of challenges balancing work and home pressure. They have to take responsibility for a number of tasks such as; having children, coping with marital issue, running household, taking care of their aged parents to

name a few in addition to meeting deadlines and being effective and efficient at work. According to Zunker (2006), most literature indicates that a large number of women are planning lifelong careers in various occupations. Some women have indicated that they have given their careers a higher or equal priority to other priorities, such as their relationships or family. Dual-career couples are therefore no longer a novel, but prevalence. This type of lifestyle has not automatically been accompanied by a change in beliefs, values or behaviour and therefore most men may have difficulty making the transition from tradition – men at work and women at home to negotiating dual-career and family roles. This requires both men and women to modify their behaviour. The inability to do so may therefore lead to multiple role conflict.



More often than not the complications of balancing work with non-work demands have led to the voluntarily exit of women from the corporate world. Numerous articles have supported the argument that work demands are incompatible with family needs, thus causing women to leave the workforce in an attempt to focus on family. Trends indicate a drop in workplace participation among working mothers and statistics show some married mothers work only part of the year, part time, or stay home while their children are young (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

### **2.9.2 EXTERNAL BARRIERS**

External barriers can be described as “discriminatory attitudes (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). The following external barriers will be discussed: discrimination, glass ceiling, organisational culture and job stressors.



### **2.9.2.1 Discrimination**

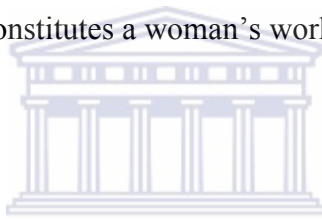
Discrimination occurs when a distinction is made between individuals or groups which lead to the person or group being disadvantaged. Two forms of discrimination exist namely, direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when a individual or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in the same situation, whereas indirect discrimination is when a practice appears inoffensive but it results in a person or group being disadvantaged (Stone, 1998).

Women experience distress and difficulty due to gender-related barriers mainly as a result of gender stereotyping in the workplace. Gender discrimination results in a subtle pattern of disadvantage that hinders women's career development (Senior, 2003). Gender stereotyping often bias's people's perceptions regarding appropriate work roles for women and men (Zunker, 2006). Even though times have changed and so have individuals' views, negative stereotypes about working women and dual-career couples still remain (Viers & Prouty, 2001). Discrimination in the workplace occurs when employment decisions regarding issues such as recruitment, selection, promotion, reward and recognition are based on the personal characteristics (age, gender, and race) of an employee instead of their performance or qualifications (Gutek et al., 1996).

Women often experience both direct and indirect discrimination within the workplace (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Amongst others the following have been noted: (i) Organisations tend to consider married women less favourable when it comes to promotions, (ii) Married women view themselves as being less likely to gain career advancement than single women (Kelly & Marin, 1998), (iii) Women are more likely to be subject to age discrimination than men, (iv) During the recruitment and selection process of organisations

preference is often given to men, as women are viewed as a greater risk, (v) Women are perceived to be less ambitious and are considered to have peaked in performance at an earlier age than men, (vi) Older women are also considered to be less qualified than men as a result of taking maternity breaks and having more family commitments, (vii) Organisations often tend to assess women on their family life, responsibilities and future commitments rather than on their abilities and achievements (Flanders, 1994).

Despite the progress women have made in work, stereotypes and outdated assumptions continue to make it difficult to enter non-traditional fields, such as science, engineering and technology (Uyen, 2005). For this reason, the most persistent challenge is linked to the beliefs and attitudes about what constitutes a woman's work.



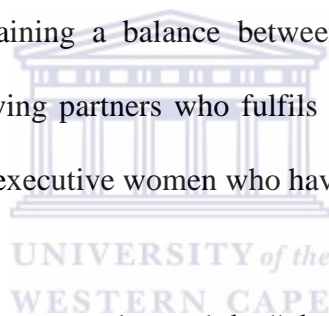
### **2.9.2.2 Glass ceiling**

When an individual is not given the opportunity to advance due to a limitation that is not apparent this is referred to as 'glass ceiling'. The term was formulated as 'ceiling' is something above an individual which does not allow one to go any further and 'glass' is transparent referring to the limitation that is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy. Regardless of the laws in place, these types of barriers still exist (Glass Ceiling, 2010).

Organisations who use this form of discrimination often find a way to cover themselves without using direct discrimination. Glass ceiling is not viewed as a formal barrier to career advancement, such as education or experience requirements. This invisible barrier only seems to be prevalent in more of the developing countries. Even though any individual can fall

victim to glass ceiling, however, it tends to affect working women the most (Glass Ceiling, 2010).

Research conducted thirteen years ago indicate that the number of women entering the labour force has increased dramatically over the past few years throughout the world (Govender, 1997). Approximately sixteen years ago it was found that even though there has been an increase in the number of women attaining management positions, significant growth has only occurred in traditionally female roles or in junior management positions (Foster, 1994). A number of authors (Booyesen 2007b; Pile 2004 cited in April et al., 2007) agreed that even if women within South Africa were able to break through the glass ceiling, they would still be faced with the challenge maintaining a balance between career and family. Most male executives are advantaged in having partners who fulfils the primary role of managing the family and home, whereas many executive women who have partners who are career-driven.



Not many women have been able to move beyond the “glass-ceiling” and advance into senior management or executive positions (Davidson, 1991). The glass ceiling is a major barrier as it prevents most minority groups from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious and highest-earning positions in the workforce. This barrier may make females feel that they are not credible to have these high-ranking positions, they may also feel as though their superiors or employers do not take them seriously nor actually see them as potential candidates (Glass ceiling, 2010).

According to Gomez-Mejia et al. (2001), when the first government study of glass ceiling was done in 1991 in the United States of America, it publicized that minorities and women were not only held back from top executive positions, but also from lower-level management

positions and directorships. These career barriers that existed continued to exist ten (10) years after the initial study conducted. A confidential study conducted within Coca-Cola identified barriers to diversity, especially for African Americans. However, in 1999 when Carleto Fiorina became the CEO of Hewlet Packard, she argued that the glass ceiling no longer existed, as the information technology industry had such a great demand that they could no longer afford to be biased against women and the minority. In the Fortune 1000 companies, women only hold 2.7 percent of the executive position, which suggests that glass ceiling still exists overall.

Furthermore, according to a study conducted by Chadud, Tealdi, Howes and Sprunt (n.d.) the findings showed that 20% of respondents have quit their jobs for personal or family issues. Respondents (65%) considered mobility to be important for career progression, and 31% saw it as moderately important. Respondents also felt that the decision to decline a transfer has slowed down their career progression, and 40% feel they were limited in their career because of their dual-career status. The study points out that many engineers are part of a dual-career couple and due to the limitations dual-career couples face in terms of career advancement, respondents are of the opinion that their situation is comparable to 'the women's glass ceiling'.

### **2.9.2.3 Organisational culture**

Organisational culture refers to an amalgamation of the values and beliefs of the people in an organisation (Smith, 1997). George and Jone (2005) state that the set of shared values, norms and beliefs that influences the way employees feel, think and behave toward each other and people outside the organisation is known as organisational culture. An organisation's culture

is extremely important as this determines the way employees perceive and respond to their environment, as well as what and how they use the information they obtain.

According to Nelson and Quick (2000), an organisation's culture serves four main purposes; namely (i) it provides members with a sense of identity and help increase their commitment to the organisation, (ii) it helps employees make sense of organisational events, (iii) it is also a way of reinforcing the organisations values and (iv) organisational culture acts as a control mechanism for people's behaviors.

An organisation's culture plays a vital role in the career development of dual-career couples as it can significantly affect individuals' experiences and career outcomes, particularly when geographical relocation is a requirement (Smith, 1997). When geographic relocation is required to further career development of one spouse/partner, this type of transition could require major adjustments in the couple's life-styles or the other partner's career (Spiker-Miller & Kees, 1995). Often partners in dual-career couple relationships career development is nullified or restricted due to a need for one partner to relocate (Smith, 1997).

Some scholars argue that some organisations give more lip service to family issues than to transforming their cultures to be responsive to work-family role integration needs (Kossek, Neo & DeMarr, 1999). Similarly, other authors imply that most organisations want to appear "politically correct" by espousing values supporting the family and by developing policies that are "family friendly", however, in reality that may not be the case as organisations may dislike children and may be unsympathetic when family issues interfere with work (Burke, 1999).

#### 2.9.2.4 Job Stressors

Rollinson (2005 cited in Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010) defines job stress as the conditions that occur due to the individual's interactions within their jobs and this is representative of the changes that take place within individuals that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. According to George and Jone (2005), various life events could result in stress and a wide variety of stressors arise from one's job.

The following six main job-related stressors will be highlighted namely, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, role underload, promotions and challenging assignments and conditions that affect employees well being.

*Role ambiguity* refers to the uncertainty employees experience when they are unsure of the expectations placed on them and how they should perform their tasks. This is more common among employees who just started at an organisation, yet every employee experiences it to some degree some time or another (George & Jone, 2005). According to Coetzee and De Villiers (2010), *role ambiguity* speaks about the amount of stress an individual may experience due to constant change or vague stipulation regarding the performance duties, responsibility, expectations and constraints that define an individual's job.

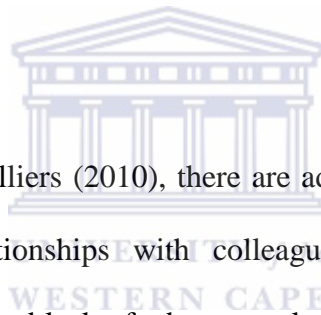
Falkenberg and Monachello (1989 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) posit that *role overload* occurs when an individual has countless social roles to fulfil, of which at least one requires excessive time commitment. According to Schreuder and Theron (2001), role overload is experienced when the total number of roles an individual have is more than he or she can meet. According to Coetzee and De Villiers (2010), role overload is experienced when an individual perceives that he or she is unable to cope or be productive due to the

amount of work allocated to them. This tends to occur when employees are expected to do more work than the time and resources available permit them to do, thus resulting in them experiencing strain. Barnett and Brennan (1997 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) delineates that more often than not dual-career couples experience work overload due to working under pressure or having conflicting demands, which can result in psychological distress. According to George and Jone (2005), conversely, some employees experience *role underload* when they have too few tasks to perform.

George and Jone (2005) contend that *promotions and challenging assignments* may also be a source of stress, especially when employees are sure they can perform effectively or have low self-efficacy. This may be more likely to happen when an individual has been promoted and has not been exposed to such a role prior to the promotion.

The *well-being of an employee* may also be affected when their income is very low or if they are threatened with being dismissed. Work stressors negatively affect employees physical and psychological health; it may lead to strain symptoms such as anxiety, frustration, tension, and depression which may in turn exert considerable influence on family life in the form of unpleasant moods. These negative outcomes can spill over from work to family thus leading to work-family conflict. Working spouses/partners in dual-career families are found to experience greater role conflict and poorer mental health due to the difficulty of finding a balance between work and family (Ballout, 2008). *Role conflict* refers to the struggle between two roles; when the roles or behaviours a person is expected to perform clash with one another (George & Jone, 2005). Work stressors produce problems that are unavoidably transmitted from work to family and vice versa; they have a severe impact on personal satisfaction, job performance, and career development (Ballout, 2008).

George and Jone (2005) contend that due to the fact that employees are working longer hours than they did 15 years ago, the ability to balance work and family poses quite a challenge. The requirement to work long hours is stressful enough and it can be an even greater stressor when it is in conflict with family demands. Employees are prone to a large amount of stress as they no longer only have to take into account their work responsibilities but they have to consider their family responsibilities as well (children or elderly parents). Viers and Prouty (2001) maintain that most research indicate that work pressures and strains spill over into couples' home life. Jones and Fletcher (1996 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) found that work stressors accounted largely for the reasons why both men and women's moods varied at home.



According to Coetzee and De Villiers (2010), there are additional job-related stressors such as: poor or unsupportive relationships with colleagues and/or line managers (work relationships), isolation (a perceived lack of adequate relationships) and unfair treatment, the lack of relevant or needed training, resources and equipment to perform their job effectively and perceived lack of opportunity to further their career prospects within the organisation for which they work. In addition, when there is great interdependence between the person's tasks and the tasks of others the person is likely to experience stress. Furthermore, the fundamental nature of a job, a non-supportive work setting as well the potential to spill over of work to family and vice versa can also cause stress.

According to Zunker (2006), dual-career couples are prone to experience job stressors due to the conflict that exist between family and work roles. Additionally, Utley and Robertson (n.d.) state that partners in dual-career couples each have commitments to their careers and to



their families. Their sense of self is interlinked with both these pursuits and therefore both partners are likely to have a strong professional identity and family-identity. Generally, when career and family commitments compete, it results in intense conflict as spouses seek to protect their sense of identity and therefore, it is crucial for these couples to find a satisfactory balance between family and professional identity. Papp (2000 cited in Utley and Robertson, n.d.) postulates that the way in which dual-career couples devote their time and divide their responsibilities gives insight into the importance they place on both family and work roles. Westman (2002 cited in Utley and Robertson, n.d.) points out that research has shown that that job stressors have a negative impact on psychological well-being of not only the worker, but his or her partner as well.

## **2.10 POSSIBLE REASONS FOR DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF DUAL-CAREER COUPLES REGARDING CAREER BARRIERS**

An individual's career choice is largely impacted by career barriers. Different types of perceived barriers can act as a limiting factor in career choice (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). The word "perceived" refers to career-related barriers that an individual believes exists, however it is not necessarily grounded in reality or based on factual information (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). The construct of perceived barriers is viewed as a fundamental explanatory variable with regard to career choice (Swanson & Tokar, 1991) however, individuals' perceptions regarding career barriers experienced may differ based on a number of factors amongst others such as their gender, age, race and whether or not they have children.

### **2.10.1 Gender**

According to Zunker (2006), after the rise of industrialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century many changes came about in terms of the division of labour. Initially, men mostly worked in the factories

and women stayed home and took care of the household tasks, but eventually this led to calls for equality. However, many years later the division of labour based on gender still exists as women continue to be seen as the primary caregiver and homemaker. Only after World War II began did division of labour based on gender phase out and women of all ethnicity began performing jobs previously considered to be a male's job. However, once the war ended women were sent back home to resume their household duties.

Additionally, Yogev (1982 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) reports that research conducted many years ago on dual-career couples and women in the workforce was mostly negative. Women who pursued careers in the 1950's were not deemed to fit the stereotypical norms and values associated with the White, heterosexual, middle-class female role and were therefore viewed as the exact opposite of the "feminine woman". This resulted in both men and fellow women criticizing employed women. Although things have changed slightly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century women still struggle for work identity and Wajcman (cited in Zunker, 2006) argues that in the corporate world career barriers are perceived differently by women and men.

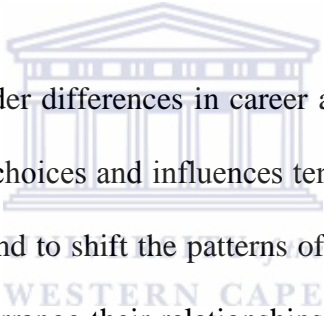
Gender is one socio-demographic characteristic that is often associated with career success; this is due to social role differences between working men and working women. Traditionally men are primarily responsible for providing financial support to the family by working, whereas women are primarily responsible for childcare and household duties. Some recent studies still support the traditional division of labour for the genders indicating that women take a more holistic approach to their lives, spend more time on family obligations, and experience greater role overload and work-family conflict than men (Ballout, 2008).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1985 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) put forward that a philosophy of equality (at the home and in the career) is often shared by dual-career couples, even though this philosophy is not always practiced. According to Spiker-Miller and Kees (1995), normally in most dual-career couples both spouses/partners participate in gender stereotyping regarding household roles and have the mindset that the majority of the responsibility for managing the career and family life will fall on the woman.

Viers and Prouty's (2001) views are that both work and domestic pressures are likely to negatively influence men, whereas women are more likely to be negatively influenced mainly by domestic pressures. Aldous (1981 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) assert that woman in dual-career relationships tend to work a double shift; one in the labour force which they get paid to do and the other in the equally demanding role as caregiver and homemaker. Mishra and Bose (1997 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) are of the opinion that that women experienced more stress than men when required to juggle multiple roles and may consequently experience role overburden, role ambiguity, role stagnation and distance within gender roles.

Bachelor, Barnett and Shen (1994; 1997 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001 ) posit that even though men perceive that they do their share or more in terms of housework, on the whole, women still seem to be fulfilling most of the household and care duties. Barnett and Shen (1997 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) reported that while females agreed that their male partners were sharing child care responsibilities, they do not do the same amount of housework as them. Hochschild (1997 cited in Viers & Prouty, 2001) contends that in a longitudinal study done, results indicated that one in five men did as much work in their homes as their female partner did.

According to Andam et al. (2005) mothers, wives or female partners in all countries are given the responsibility of child care, cooking, cleaning, and other homemaking tasks. Fox (1975 cited in Naidoo & Jano, 2002) conjecture that regardless of the changes that have occurred, women within dual-career relationships remain the person who takes the primary responsibility for managing the home and family activities, even when she is employed full-time outside of the home. Furthermore, Andam et al. (2005) states that the prime childbearing years for most women are between the age of 20 and 35 where this is generally the time in which most individuals launch their careers by studying hard, working long hours and taking temporary positions (often abroad).



It is common for there to be gender differences in career aspirations and directions of dual-career partners. Women's career choices and influences tend to be quite different from those of men (Smith, 1997). Women tend to shift the patterns of their careers by rotating different aspects in their lives in order to arrange their relationships and roles in new ways (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). The careers of male partners tend to be the product of strong internal forces such as clear career goals and purposeful strategies, often with age parameters firmly articulated at an early career stage (Smith, 1997). Men tend to follow traditional career paths associated with one industry. Men's careers have a propensity to have a linear or sequential aspect. They deal with challenges first, then concerns about themselves, then later focus on balance and others (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

On the contrary, women's career objectives are likely to be less specific and determined later in life; personal career outcomes are attributed to accident rather than design. Research shows that more often than not women's careers are compromised as a result of their dual-career

status because they were unable to take up offers of promotion (interstate or overseas) for fear of disrupting their partner's career. Furthermore, women are also more likely to plan breaks for maternity even though this may prove dysfunctional in career terms. This indicates that domestic considerations are likely to override women's personal preferences in career transitions. This may be due to the fact that women still tend to undertake the majority of child care and domestic duties even when their career responsibilities are comparable with or greater than those of their partner. For this reason women's career transitions are often facilitated by job convenience, such as proximity to home or flexibility of working arrangements (Smith, 1997).

According to Burke (1999), some authors propose that women might be more likely to be affected by family structure than men. When dual-career couples have children, women tend to devote fewer hours per week to work, are less job involved, consider their careers as a lower priority and spend more hours per week in household responsibilities. These women may be less likely to meet the demands of their employing organisations as a result. The more women deviate from the male norm of complete availability to the organisation, the more obstacles they tend to face in terms of career advancement. It is also important to consider the division of labour within the family and the question of whose career within a dual-career couple will have priority. Lastly, very few organisations create work environments in which women with children will not be disadvantaged.

Studies conducted confirm that women generally experience more discrimination in the workplace than men (Gutek, Cohen & Tsui, 1996). A comparative study that was conducted comprising of sixty-nine (69) men and women executives found women reported greater barriers to career advancement, citing hindrances such as lack of general management or line

experience (79% agreement), exclusion from informal networks (77% agreement), stereotypes about women's roles and abilities (72% agreement), and failure of top leaders to assume accountability for women's advancement (68% agreement). Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents agreed that "commitment to personal/family responsibilities" was the most important challenge for women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Whilst most dual-career partners exhibit similar frequencies of career changes and may experience a similar degree of work-family conflict, women tend to experience shorter tenure, more frequent job changes and generally have less progression in their careers (Smith, 1997).

### **2.10.2 Children (parental demands)**

The complexity of career decisions are compounded when a couple decides to raise children as there is a greater need to coordinate work and family roles within the couple when childcare is involved (Budworth et al., 2008). With couples who do not have family responsibilities imbalance is likely to be much less prominent, partners have greater discretion in career decision making with fewer stakeholders to consider (Smith, 1997).

Parental demands can affect the careers of dual-career couples due to the increased demands of spending a vast amount of time at home taking care of their children and investing the required time and energy at work to support their career advancement and success (Ballout, 2008). Doress–Worters (1994 cited in Ugwu, 2009) postulates that the effect of family responsibilities has a greater bearing on working women than on working men. Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) contend that data obtained from a population survey conducted approximately five years ago indicated that although working mothers are more likely to

work full-time than twenty years ago, only thirty-seven percent (37%) of them worked full-time year round compared to fifty-four percent (54%) of women without children and sixty-six percent (66%) of men. Past patterns show a drop in the amount of working mothers and statistics demonstrate that some married/cohabating mothers only work part of the year, part time, or stay home while their children are young.

Studies have also shown that important differences are revealed between spouses/partners when couples have children. Individuals who have multiple career demands often generate role conflict and women with children are particularly prone to tensions between career demands and family responsibilities, which may adversely affect their career progression and work performance (Smith, 1997). Non-parents normally have more flexibility in managing their time and personal life and smaller amount of familial responsibilities, and are therefore less likely to experience family-work conflict. A dual-career couple's parental demand is measured by the number and age of children living with them. Dual-career couples with younger children and larger families are more likely to experience an increase of work and family demands, leading to higher levels of work-family conflict and may be more likely to desire and need family-supportive career opportunities to help them balance work-family roles and reduce the conflict (Ballout, 2008).

According to Zunker (2006), the main concern regarding maternal employment is the effect it will have not only on the children, but also the family and the working women themselves. A vast number of research has been conducted on how maternal employment affects children, Herr and Cramer (1996 cited in Zunker, 2006) concluded that generally maternal employment does not harm children. In a study conducted nationally by Ferree (1984 cited in Zunker, 2006) concerning satisfaction variables, findings indicate that working mothers seem

to cope well. The results of the aforementioned study indicated that there were no significant differences in life satisfaction between working and non-working mothers. In a related article a number of authors (Scarr, Phillips & McCartney, 1989; Suchet & Barling, 1985; cited in Zunker, 2006) found that stress experienced by working women are often brought about by spousal approval, dependable childcare and shared family responsibilities.

### **2.10.3 Age**

With time all things change, similarly dual-career couples perceptions regarding career barriers may vary based on their age. Age related barriers are more prevalent amongst younger and older age groups (Arber & Ginn, 1991). According to Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), men are less likely to experience age discrimination than women.

Research conducted at a large financial institution in the United Kingdom revealed that women experienced discrimination at various stages of their careers. Women younger than 30 years old reported to experience sex discrimination in relation to unequal pay and benefits. Moreover, younger women within the organisation were assigned less challenging work, were overlooked for promotions, and were treated less favourably than their male counterparts. Female employees between the age group of 30 to 39 years old also reported to experience negative treatment (women at the age of 36 were perceived as being “too old” to apply for promotions, whilst others felt that they were disadvantaged after periods of maternity leave and part-time work). Additionally, women over the age of 40 reported unequal access to training and promotional opportunities (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). Another study conducted confirmed the above finding; it also indicated that women were perceived to age earlier than men based on the assumption that women reached the peak in their careers at approximately age 35, ten years before their male counterparts (Itzin & Phillipson, 1994).



According to Graham and Bennett (1998), it is clear that older workers encounter a number of problems in the workplace. Some of the problems that older employees are confronted with include: early loss of employment due to their age, unfair dismissal once reaching a certain age, difficulties finding new employment, exclusion from training and when organisations are forced to downsize older employees tend to be targeted first.

Many myths or stereotypes are attached to employees based on their age, especially older employees. Examples of such myths include older workers being seen as are less efficient, motivated and productive than younger workers. Evidence from research indicate that in most jobs productivity does not change until employees are well past the traditional retirement age. Another myth is that older workers are seen to be less flexible than younger workers and are more resistant to change. However, studies indicate that these characteristics are not related to age and that older workers have a tendency to remain updated with skills and knowledge. Other age-related myths are also that older employees remain absent from work more than younger employees and that older employees are more prone to accidents than younger employees. These myths have been proven to be untrue as research indicates that employees between the ages of 50 years and 60 years have attendance rates equal or better than those of other age groups. Earlier studies have shown that employees who are 55 years and older make up 13.6% of the labourforce and only have 9.7%% on-the-job injuries (French, 1998). French (1998) points out that subtle discrimination stemming from such myths can have harmful effects to some employees' careers and career development.

#### **2.10.4 Race**

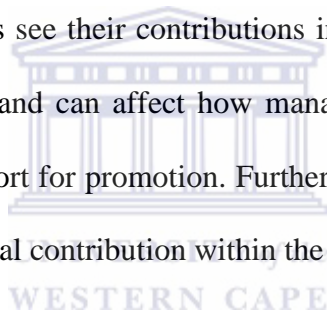
Despite the fact that South Africa initiated significant law reform efforts a number of years ago to achieve greater social justice and equality and to redress past unfair discrimination, racism is still prevalent in South African organisations. This is made known by the fact that Black women are scarcely represented in many sectors of the economy and not in higher paying occupations. Although the South African constitution, affirmative action and employment equity policies were developed and enforced to protect the rights of all women, more specifically to improve the status of women in organisations, it seems though that the implementation of legislation is not enough to ensure that organisations change their policies and practices (Mathur-Helm, 2004).

Race can be a career barrier in itself especially for Black South Africans, more specifically Black women. An individual's race can make it extremely difficult to attain senior positions (Booyesen, 1999). Past research indicates that women and minority groups receive lower salaries than White men (Barrum, Liden and DiTomaso's, 1995).

According to Hirsh and Lyons (2010), a large amount of research points to racial discrimination as a constant source of labour market disadvantage for racial and ethnic minorities. A number of authors (Bertrand & Mullainathan 2004; Fix & Struyk 1993; Pager 2003 cited in Hirsh & Lyons, 2010) agreed that when applying for jobs, Whites were more likely to get a job interview than African Americans and Hispanics.

A report written by a global talent research firm, Novations Group, indicates that race and ethnicity affect perceptions of contribution and inherent value of direct reports or individual

contributors by managers in the workplace. Managers participating in the research were asked to rank their direct reports in terms of contribution and performance based on the four Stages of Contribution Model: stage 1—contributing dependently, stage 2—contributing independently, stage 3—contributing through others, and stage 4—contributing strategically. Direct reports were also asked to do this task by assessing their own contributions. The results showed differing results between the manager's views and direct reports views. Managers' perceived the direct reports to contribute more in stage 1, whereas direct reports generally considered themselves to contribute more in stages 2 and 3. The biggest discrepancy that existed in manager and direct report self ratings were for Asian employees. Managers also rated the contributions of African American professionals to be greater in stage 1, while African Americans see their contributions in stage 2. The study suggests that these differences are significant and can affect how managers actually position an African American employee or direct report for promotion. Furthermore, this could largely impact or limit their future level of influential contribution within the organization (McKeown, 2010).



It is apparent from most documented research that race discrimination is a persistent reality in the workplace. Racism acts as a relentless barrier to and can prevent individuals from progressing to top levels of management. The research findings suggest that personal attributions of discrimination vary across social groups and their environments. The workplace context is pivotal for understanding how individuals apply such discrimination, to their experiences (Hirsh & Lyons, 2010).

## **2.11 RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF DUAL-CAREER COUPLES**

Dual-careers couples have dual loyalties which may result in negative consequences for their personal relationships and the work environment (Smith, 1997). Individuals bring their specific and special skills, abilities, talents and expectations to their employment situation, however, due to their specific situation they may encounter hindrances which interfere with their progress in their job or career plans (Ballout, 2008).

Due to the large amount of responsibilities couples currently have, it is important for workers to have flexibility in order to juggle work, home, and family responsibilities (Gordon, Whelan-Berry & Hamilton, 2007). It is also suggested that dual-career couples should have more frequent open and honest discussions, set priorities, examine and discuss the different roles, communicate values, manage daily life by redefining the different roles in such a way that both partners are capable of doing what is needed and taking responsibility for managing one's own stress in order to balance their career and family (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Previous research highlights certain ways in which dual-career couples can cope with problems they may face, these include: relaxation, discussing problems with support groups, meditation, role management, time management and maintaining positive outlook on life (Ugwu, 2009). A number of coping strategies can be employed by dual-career couples to deal with work and family stressors. This can be done by compartmentalizing roles, changing expectations, speak up about needs, control tempers, accept differences, rest, relax or exercise, forge a united front, avoid difficult family members, facilitate family interdependence and provide support or accept support (Bird & Schnurman-Crook, 2005).

It is imperative that dual-career couples realise that their work and family roles are interlinked and interdependent. It is required of them to develop the solutions and skills necessary to deal effectively with the critical issues in their chosen lifestyle. They should learn to achieve a balance based on perceived fairness rather than strict equality regarding the division of family roles and responsibilities. Dual-career couples' goals should be to gain flexibility in developing a system supportive of their lifestyle and work needs. To develop equitable, egalitarian relationships each spouse/partner needs to develop effective skills for goal setting, communication, negotiation and conflict resolution (Spiker-Miller & Kees, 1995).

## **2.12 WAYS ORGANISATIONS COULD ASSIST DUAL-CAREER COUPLES**

Continuous negotiations are needed between the organisation and the employees in order to integrate the demands of the organisation and the career needs of its employees. The challenge of career management is to meet organisational and individual needs (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Hall and Mirvis (1995 cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) state that a survey conducted in the United States of America in 1995 revealed that fifty percent (50%) of citizens regard 'family supportive policies' as a key consideration when making career choices.

At countless organisations, family obligations are perceived to be a burden that diminishes work efficiency. A number of organisations, especially private companies, expect employees to be available for work at any time without taking family obligations into account. It is imperative that organisations value and respect family obligations (Andam et al., 2005). Organisations often fail to understand the challenges dual-career couples face and try to implement the traditional corporate linear model of long hours, face-time, and extensive

travel. Organisations do not realise that inflexible corporate policies contribute to a majority of turnover and result in an immeasurable loss of human capital for the organisation (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). It is therefore important for organisations to respond to the shifting demographics by adopting voluntary policies such as alternative work schedules and child and elder care assistance to help workers meet family needs, which in turn, will be beneficial to the organisation by attracting and retaining the best talent (Kossek et al., 1999).

### **2.12.1 Child care assistance**

Studies show that every year the percentage of working parents in the workforce increases, any steps taken to improve productivity among these employees may be cost effective and largely beneficial to organisations (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Organisations can provide quality child-care facilities or can help couples cover child-care expenses if those facilities are not available at the workplace (Andam et al., 2005). One way to improve the productivity of employees with children is to relieve some of the child care burdens through employer-sponsored programmes. These programmes include providing counselling to help parents select child care and a list of licensed child care providers. Alternatively, employers can donate money to programmes designed to increase the amount of child care available in the community, paying existing child care centres close to work to hold openings for their employees, organisations can sponsor an entire centre by including space for a child care centre in new office buildings or employers can start their own day care centre by providing start-up costs, or space for the centre or both (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

### **2.12.2 Offer flexible schedules where appropriate**

Organisations could respect employees working schedules or allow for flexible working hours whenever possible. This can be done by a negotiation between employers and

employees so that family-friendly meeting schedules can be implemented and to ensure that working hours are kept within a specified time frame (Andam et al., 2005).

Various researches (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello,1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al.,1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) suggest that by using technology it is possible to have more flexible working hours as this would allow employees to work from home when their children are sick or alternatively to work from home on a full-time basis. Greater flexibility can also be created by making more permanent part-time jobs available in professional and managerial positions.

Work can also be redesigned in the following ways so that it can be made flexible: (i) videoconferencing can be used to eliminate unnecessary travel and (ii) rewards and promotions can be given to individuals who effectively use flexible schedules and are role models for others (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

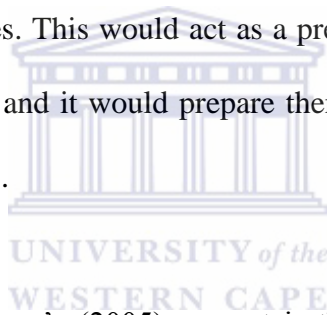
### **2.12.3 Linear career paths**

Various authors (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello,1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al., 1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) assert that alternative career paths can be introduced as not every employee wants to climb to corporate ladder. This would then make room for different career paths (horizontal, stationary, slower paced) and accommodate the differing needs and priority of individuals. In addition Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) suggest that organisations could create programmes or employment contracts that allow professionals and workers of all types to take a career interruption and return at a later point. Rewards can

be given to employees who return with advancement possibilities and employee alumni networks can be maintained for communication purposes.

#### **2.12.4 State support for the advancement of women.**

Various researches (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al., 1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) maintain that organisations should be sensitive to the needs of women as they experience more constraints than men and are often required to make more trade-offs. As upward mobility is often impossible for women due to their commitments to home and family, organisations could develop female managerial skills through training and lateral moves. This would act as a preventative measure against female employees falling too far behind and it would prepare them for more senior positions when their family commitments are less.



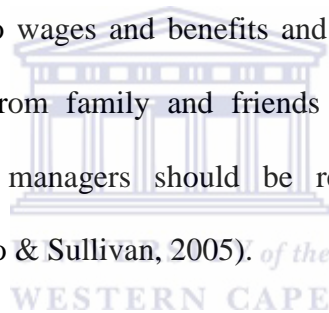
Furthermore, Mainiero and Sullivan's (2005) purport is that top-level managers should be made accountable for the turnover and advancement rates of women. Career succession plans should be provided that includes time off for career interruptions with rewards attached for re-entry. A concerted effort should be made to monitor the number of men and women in the "pipeline" for general and upper management positions. Early field experiences should be considered for women who have not yet taken a career interruption and profit and loss experience to women who return once they have re-acclimated.



### **2.12.5 Traditional reward systems based on face time, long hours and travel commitments**

Various researches (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello,1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al.,1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) are of the view that organisations can provide employees with relocation assistance when needed as part of their employee benefit as this would lighten the burden for both partners.

Furthermore, organisations could create reward systems based on outcomes and actual performance, not on the amount of time spent at the office. Gender discrimination must be completely eliminated relating to wages and benefits and gender inequities in training and promotion systems. Feedback from family and friends can be included as part of the evaluation process. In return, managers should be rewarded for developing unique compensation packages (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

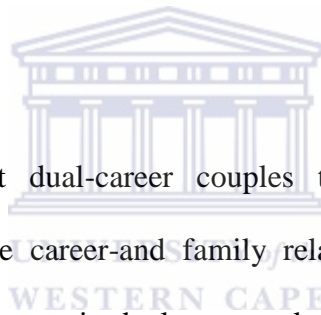


### **2.12.6 Provide family-friendly programmes**

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) posit that in addition to providing programmes, organisation could create an organisational culture that encourages and rewards the use of such programs.

Various authors (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello,1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al.,1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) emphasise that organisations can assist dual-career couples by showing more organisational sensitivity for home life, provide training workshops for employees which will aid them with the skills needed to manage their home interface, include employees' partners/spouses in career discussions and organisations should

not create an environment in which employees feel compelled to choose between career advancement and devotion to their family. Organisations can put into practice the use of family friendly benefits that include things such as travel policies, sick leave, parental leave and vacation policies, and company resources such as computers which could be provided for family recreational and educational use to be used for family-work integration. Family days can also be introduced to encourage employees' families to visit them at work and to become more familiar with the organisation and organisations could provide employees with information regarding work and family policies and job demands. Other ways in which to create a family friendly environment is to get newsletters underway with information on work and family issues, invest in extramural activities for employees and value employees as whole people.



Organisations could also assist dual-career couples to sustain a manageable career progression as well as minimize career-and family related conflicts by recognising the circumstances and needs of employees in dual-career relationships, particularly in respect of career and family responsibilities. Additionally, creative career management systems which encourage flexible career paths may help employees achieve a better balance of organisational and individual requirements especially when they are accompanied by more flexible working conditions. A larger number of flexible managerial mobility policies can further facilitate career transitions of dual-career couples. Organisations could also reconsider managerial work processes and the accompanying norms and expectations as this could stop work demands which are convenient for the organisation rather than job-related. The organisation's culture could also be relooked at and revised to legitimize part-time managerial positions as it will benefit the career development of women in particular (Smith, 1997).

Additionally organisations could aid dual-career couples by legitimizing a wide variety of career paths and options, offering the necessary flexibility as well as seriously examining the time demands of work and how these may be re-thought to facilitate both women's career advancement and organisational performance (Burke, 1999). Organisations can also assist dual-career couples by finding work for accompanying spouses/partners when the one spouse/partner is required to relocate to another country or region for work purposes (Richardson, 2006).

Furthermore, organisations could also provide couples with career management counselling, as this would involve both partners thinking about what their goals are and possible action plans. The partners would then come together to share this with each other and the counsellor would then assist the couple by offering possible solutions and alternatives. This would result in a joint career plan and both partners and the organisation can benefit from this. This is especially useful for dual-career couples who have overseas assignments (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2001).

### **2.13 BENEFITS ORGANISATIONS WILL OBTAIN WHEN ASSISTING DUAL-CAREER COUPLES**

The adaption of work systems and development programmes to accommodate employees' talents and circumstances more effectively will aid employers in achieving career transitions which are beneficial to managers, employees and employees' families. Work practices which provide choices will also assist all employees to forge more effective combinations of work and family, which best suits their individual needs and life stages (Smith, 1997).

According to Bach (2005), work-family policies that are put in place within various organisations aid employees by assisting employees to balance the demand of work and home pressures. This may in turn, result in lower turnover intentions regardless of the extent to which employees benefit from such programmes or policies, as it symbolizes corporate concern for employees. Such policies may also create a sense of obligation to the workplace and greater citizenship behaviour which may include supporting co-workers with their job responsibilities, employees may be more likely to give suggestions for improvement and attend quality meetings.

Authors of previous research contend that employees' experience career satisfaction and success when the work environment offers them the flexibility to combine work and family life and provides career development programmes and opportunities capable of satisfying their career competencies and needs (Ballout, 2008). Organisations that facilitate the career development of the growing numbers of dual-career couples will benefit by enhancing labour retention and organisational productivity (Smith, 1997).

Freedman and Greenhaus (cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) delineate that organisations who have a family friendly policy benefit individuals' careers and personal lives. Employees who receive organisational support tend to aspire to senior positions, are more contented with their careers, are more committed to their organisations, experience less work-family conflict, are more likely to have children and are more satisfied with their personal growth and development.

## 2.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the career barriers experienced by dual-career couples. The chapter focused particularly on both internal and external barriers that may impede dual-career couples' career or job advancement. It has also highlighted possible reasons why dual-career partner's perceptions may differ in terms of the career barriers they encounter. The chapter concludes by putting forth recommendations to help increase the effectiveness of career development of dual-career couples, ways organisations could assist as well as the benefits they could derive from this assistance.

The next chapter discusses the research design, research methodology and statistical procedures used to analyse the data.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the method used to investigate the research questions. It provides insight into the research design through the description of the sample and procedure followed. The measuring instruments (namely, a demographic questionnaire and the Career Barriers Inventory – Revised) used to gather data are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the statistical techniques utilised to test the hypotheses.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Sekaran (2001), sampling is a process in which an adequate number of elements from the population will be selected, with the intention that the sample and an understanding of its properties or characteristics would make it possible to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements. Probability sampling and non-probability are two main sampling methods which are used. Probability sampling gives all participants an equal chance of being selected and non-probability sampling, however does not give all participants an equal chance.

For the purpose of the study the sampling procedure used was non-probability sampling; in particular snowball sampling was used to select the participants. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), snowball sampling is implemented by collecting data on the few members of a population one can locate and ask those individuals to provide information needed to locate other members of the population they might know. It begins with a small number of potential respondents. The initial respondents identify other potential respondents, who identify other

potential respondents, and so on. For this study, the initial respondents were employees of a large retail organisation in the Western Cape who are in a dual-career couple relationship; they were then asked to identify other employees who are also in dual-career couple relationships who could partake in the research endeavour. The advantages of this sampling procedure are that it is convenient and less expensive. The disadvantage however, is that such sampling is not easily generalizable.

A quantitative methodology was used to assess employees' perceptions of career barriers. A self-developed demographic questionnaire was used together with the Career Barriers Inventory – Revised to gather the data. According to Sekaran (2001), the advantages of using a questionnaire are that it is cheaper, less time consuming and it prevents interview bias. It also ensures anonymity and participants may respond more honestly. Mouton (1996) highlights additional advantages when using a questionnaire: it is an efficient way of collecting information from a large amount of respondents and it is standardised and relatively easy to administer. Furthermore, Weiers (1998) contends that questionnaires have a number of advantages when it is used for research purposes, namely, it is relatively straightforward to analyse information from a structured questionnaire, and it allows participants sufficient time to formulate accurate responses.

Conversely Mouton (1996) also points out the possible disadvantages of using a questionnaire, namely, response rates on questionnaires are normally low. Weiers (1998) highlighted incomplete questions as another disadvantage. Furthermore, Mouton (1996) posits that most quantitative studies use non-probability sampling, from which the characteristics of the population sampled cannot be inferred.

### 3.2.1 Population and Sample

According to Sekaran (2001), a population is the entire group of people, things or events which is of interest to the researcher's investigation. The population for this research comprised of employees in dual-career relationships from one large retail organisation in the Western Cape. The large retail organisation employs 16200 employees in South Africa and Namibia, 3300 employees work at Head office in the Western Cape and of those 300 employees are in a dual-career relationship.

Only employees within the following departments were solicited to participate in the research: Human Resources, Marketing, Logistics, Finance, Group Merchandise Procurement (GMP), Buying, Sourcing, Audit, Planning and Group Services. Executives, call-centre employees, as well as employees in customer services were excluded from this study; executives are often out of the office and call centre and customer service employees work different shifts which makes it difficult to retrieve questionnaires and it was anticipated that this could have resulted in a low response rate from this group. The population comprised of men and women, who were permanent and contracted employees.

A total of 95 employees were in a dual-career relationship, from which a sample was drawn. According to Sekaran (2001), a sample is a division of the population; it includes some members selected from the population. Ninety-five (95) questionnaires were distributed of which seventy-seven (77) responded, hence achieving a response rate of 81%. According to Sekaran (2001), a response rate of 30% is regarded as acceptable for most research purposes.



### **3.2.2 Procedure**

A meeting was held with the HR Manager in the Recruitment Department to obtain permission as well as a letter was compiled asking the relevant individuals permission to conduct the research within the organisation. Once permission was obtained, the researcher approached each employee personally that fit the profile (that is in a dual-career relationship) and asked their willingness to participate. They were also informed that participation was voluntary. Once they indicated their interest, the purpose as well as the aims and objectives of the research were explained. Furthermore, they were also told that the results would be used for the intended research only and to make recommendations to management. They were also assured that all responses would remain confidential and respondents would remain anonymous as no identifying information were asked on the questionnaires. All of the above information was also compiled in a covering letter which was attached to questionnaire with the instructions for completion of the questionnaire. Upon completion respondents were requested to return the questionnaire within three weeks of receipt to the researcher in the enclosed envelope and place it in a box marked 'completed questionnaires' situated in the Recruitment office. As an alternative, the researcher also collected the sealed questionnaires every alternate day from those who were unable to drop it in the box, until the due date specified.

### **3.2.3 Measuring instruments (Biographical questionnaire & Research instrument)**

The data for the study was collected by means of two measuring instruments, namely a Demographic Questionnaire and the Career Barriers Inventory (Revised). The data gathered from each questionnaire was treated as an individual data source.

### ***3.2.3.1 Section A: Demographic Questionnaire (items 1-16)***

A self-developed demographic questionnaire was compiled by the researcher in order to gather biographical information concerning the participants participating in the study. The questionnaire consists of sixteen (16) items which required respondents to provide personal information regarding their gender, age, marital status, whether partners assist with chores, home language, race, number of children in the household, age of children, highest qualification, intention to study further, department they work in, years of service in the organisation, length of service in current position, whether their career expectations were met and if their career development has been hindered due to their dual-career couples status.

### ***3.2.3.2 Section B: The Career Barriers Inventory – Revised (CBI-R) Questionnaire (items 17-86)***

The questionnaire was specifically designed to elicit responses regarding perceptions of career barriers.

Empirical studies support the fact that the construct of barriers are important in explaining the career choice process. Different types of perceived barriers can be a limiting factor in career choice (Swanson & Tokar, 1991). The word “perceived” refers to career-related barriers that an individual believes exists however, it is not necessarily grounded in reality or based on factual information (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). Nonetheless, the construct of perceived barriers is viewed as a fundamental explanatory variable with regard to career choice (Swanson & Tokar, 1991).

The CBI-R is a revised version of the Career Barriers Inventory as the original version of the CBI had many weaknesses. The CBI-R was initially developed by Swanson and Tokar (1991). The questionnaire consists of seventy (70) items which examines the possible impacts of career barriers participants have encountered whilst trying to develop their careers. The measurement instrument is designed using a numerical scale with a seven (7) response alternative for each item ranging from 'would not hinder at all' (weighted 1) to 'would hinder somewhat' (weighted 4) and 'would completely hinder' (weighted 7).

### ***3.2.3.3 Dimensions of the Questionnaire***

According to Swanson, Daniels and Tokar (1996), the scales are described as follows:

(i) The *Sex Discrimination* scale consists of seven items. This scale assesses discrimination regarding family planning and marital status. The original version comprised of 14 items. Items that were retained reflected discrimination rather than tokenism or under-representation of one sex.

(ii) The *Lack of Confidence* scale consists of four items. These items assess confidence and self-esteem (for example, Unsure of how to "sell myself" to an employer). This scale was revised significantly during the revision of the CBI. In the original version of the CBI this scale was entitled 'Lack of Confidence, Ability, or Interest' and it consisted of 16 items reflecting a diversity of content. It was therefore redefined and the content was narrowed to include four items directly related to confidence and self-esteem.

(iii) The *Multiple-Role Conflict* scale consist of eight items and assesses role-conflict in general.

(iv) The *Conflict between Children and Career Demands* scale consists of seven items. Balancing work responsibilities with raising of children responsibilities are assessed.

(v) The *Racial Discrimination* scale consists of six items. This scale assesses racial discrimination broadly. The most significant change was to delete items related to age discrimination and concentrate on racial discrimination.

(vi) The *Inadequate Preparation* scale (consisting of five items) assesses insufficient preparation regarding career choices, such as “lacking inadequate skills for my job” (for example, leaderships, communication and decision – making).

(vii) The *Disapproval by Significant Others* scale consists of three items. This scale assesses sources of disapproval regarding career choices (for example, parents or family).

(viii) The *Decision-Making Difficulties* scale consists of eight items. This scale assesses difficulty with choosing a career direction and being unsure of career alternatives/career goals.

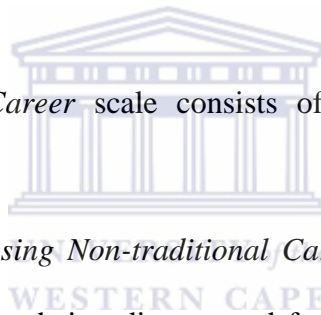
(ix) The *Dissatisfaction with Career* scale consists of five items. This scale assesses disappointment and boredom.

(x) The *Discouraged from Choosing Non-traditional Careers* scale consists of five items. Support for non-traditional fields - being discouraged from pursuing fields which are non-traditional for the sex (for example, engineering for women) is assessed.

(xi) The *Disability/Health Concerns* scale consists of three items. This scale assesses items which limit career choice due to disability or health reasons.

(xii) The *Job Market Constraints* scale consists of four items. This scale assesses items related to the job market (for example, difficulty in finding a job due to a tight job market or not wanting to relocate for a job or career).

(xiii) The *Difficulties with Networking/Socialisation* scale. This scale consists of five items and assesses work adjustment and socialisation. It was included in the most recent version of the instrument. The scale was developed by using two items that was assigned to other scales.



#### ***3.2.3.4 Psychometric properties***

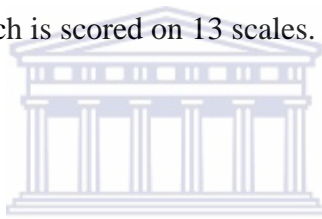
Swanson and Tokar (1991a; 1991b cited in Swanson et. al., 1996) claim that the CBI is a useful tool in understanding career barriers. According to Swanson et. al. (1996), the CBI measuring instrument is symbolic of a comprehensive psychometrically sound tool to assess the relationship of perceptions of career barriers on career-related issues. Furthermore, Swanson and Tokar (1991b cited in Swanson, Daniels & Tokar, 1996 ) purport that the Career Barriers Inventory (CBI) is a multidimensional self-report instrument created to assess a broad sphere of barriers that may occur in various career-related events, such as when choosing a career, job performance or work-family interface.

Initially the CBI consisted of 112 items which were derived from a thorough review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature based on the perceptions of barriers to career development, to ensure comprehensive coverage of the barriers domain (Falk & Cosby, 1978; Farmer, 1976; Harmon, 1977; Matthews & Tiedeman, 1964; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; O'Leary, 1974; Russell & Rush, 1987; Swanson & Tokar, 1991a cited in Swanson et. al., 1996). The first validation study of the CBI included 313 female and 245 male college students who rated how each of the 112 barriers could potentially impact their careers. The measure used a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = would not hinder at all, 7 = would completely hinder). This led to the creation on the 18 factorially-derived barriers scales, which included the principal component (which will be discussed later). It was then critical to assess the psychometric adequacy of the 18 CBI scales. This was done through reliability analyses of each scale, scale intercorrelations and item-scale intercorrelations. The results of this indicated that items belonged on the scales to which they had been assigned based on the principal-components analysis and that CBI scales had a median alpha estimate of .81; therefore internally consistent and factor pure (median intercorrelation of .32). Swanson and Tokar (1991b cited

in Swanson et. al., 1996) put forth that the second part of the investigation focused on the latent structure and that salience of the 18 CBI variables may differ based on gender (males and females). According to Swanson et. al. (1996), in order to test if differences exist between males and females the scores of the CBI were compared by gender and separate principal component analyses of CBI scale intercorrelations were conducted for each gender. The results indicated that differences did exist in the perceptions of women and men regarding the potential impact of certain barriers.

The original CBI had however, a number of flaws. Firstly, the measures consisted of too many items (too long) and therefore were not used in many studies and secondly, some items needed more clarity or assessed the same thing (Swanson et. al., 1996). After revising the CBI in a two-step process the changes resulted in an 84-item version of the CBI, with 16 scales. An analysis of several independent samples were undertaken to evaluate the decisions made regarding which items to delete and which items to reassign to scales. After the evaluation it became apparent however, that further revisions would benefit the instrument by providing more narrowly defined scales (Swanson et. al., 1996). Several data sets were used to evaluate decisions regarding the re-design of the CBI. Swanson and Daniels (1994b cited in Swanson et. al., 1996) claim that the main source of information was obtained by using the 84-item CBI-S from a sample which included 222 college students (79 men and 143 women). Two other sample groups were used; a sample of 177 college students which comprised of 76 men and 101 women (Subich & Tokar, 1995) and a sample of 279 college women who were both assessed using the original 112-item CBI (Shuttleworth, 1992). This was done in order to determine which items to eliminate. The CBI was then re-examined and redefined. “Five types of revisions were made: (a) 12 new items were written to expand the scope of coverage (such as increasing the number of items on the Racial Discrimination scale and creating a

new Job Market Constraints scale), (b) 21 items were eliminated, (c) 4 items that initially had been dropped in the previous phase of the revision were reinstated, primarily to insure adequate coverage of specific content, (d) all of the items were reviewed for clarity of wording, and (e) the items were presented in random order on the instrument rather than with other items from the same scale. Changes in the wording of items were minor and were designed to: (a) make items more personally relevant and (b) clarify the intent of the item, such as adding examples of gender-nontraditional careers. The final change made in the current version of the CBI was to randomize the order of presentation of items within the instrument (Swanson et. al., 1996, p. 225).” Swanson and Daniels (1995c cited in Swanson et. al., 1996) postulates that the current version of the CBI, which is known as the CBI-Revised, consists of 70 items which is scored on 13 scales.



#### **3.2.3.4.1 Reliability**

Reliability is the consistent relationship between scores on the test and the attribute being measured (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). According to Sekaran (2001), reliability is an indication of the extent to which a measure is without bias (error free) and therefore it offers consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument.

The reliability of the CBI-R was measured by using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha is a reliability coefficient that can be used to indicate how well the item in a set is positively correlated to each other. The closer Cronbach Alpha is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency. If the reliability of the questionnaire is less than 0.60, it is considered to be poor, however, if it ranges between 0.70 (it is acceptable) and over 0.80 (it is good). The Cronbach Alpha is a statistical method that is used to test internal consistency (Sekaran, 2001).

Throughout the development of the CBI, the aim was to achieve adequate internal consistency reliability. While reviewing the original 18-scale version of the CBI, quite a few of the longer scales had alpha coefficients higher than .90 and were focused on for item reduction. On the other hand, some of the very short scales were found to have an alpha coefficient lower than .60; these scales were identified for further evaluation and revision (Swanson et. al., 1996).

A sample of one-hundred (100) college students were used to derive the means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients of the CBI-R. It was established that the internal characteristics of the CBI-R were solid. The internal consistency coefficient varied from 0.64 to 0.86 with a mean of 0.77. Although most of the scales were at acceptable levels, some of the coefficients were lower than corresponding coefficients in previous samples (for example, disapproval by significant others were not altered in any way throughout the revision of the CBI, but the alpha coefficient was substantially lower (.64) in the most recent sample compared to previous samples (ranged from .76-.89). Similarly, conflict between children and career demands had alpha coefficients of 0.75 compared to a range of 0.81 to 0.86 in a previous sample). This could be due to the the presentation of the items being rearranged in the CBI-R - in the earlier version (CBI), the three items on disapproval by significant others were contiguously arranged, whereas in the current version (CBI-R) they were distributed throughout (Swanson & Daniels, 1996). According to Swanson et al. (1996), the alpha coefficients signifies that there is adequate internal consistency reliability, especially due to the fact that the dual goals of the revisions of the CBI were to both shorten and strengthen many of the scales.



## ***Validity***

Validity refers to the extent to which a test really measures the postulated characteristic(s) it purports to measure (Jooste, 2001).

For the Career Barriers Inventory it was found that the intercorrelations were generally high ranging from 0.27 to 0.80 with a mean value of 0.60. Significant racial differences emanated on eight of the thirteen CBI-R scales. The highest correlation was between racial discrimination and sex discrimination. Conversely, the lowest correlation was between disapproval by significant others and disability/ health concerns (Swanson & Daniels, 1996).

To validate the CBI-R, the construct validity was checked. Data related to the demographic characteristics of sex, race and ethnicity has shown expected relationships to CBI scales and provides the strongest and most consistent evidence for construct validity of the CBI. An example of this is that females scored higher than males on seven (7) of the thirteen (13) CBI-R scales. Significant racial differences also became known on eight (8) of the thirteen (13) CBI-R scales, as ethnic minority subjects scored higher than Caucasian subjects on racial discrimination (Swanson, Daniels & Tokar, 1996).

According to Swanson et al. (1996), the intercorrelations suggest that a logical relationship exists amongst the scales - an example of this is the strong association between scales measuring barriers related to lacking confidence and barriers related to difficulties in making career decision. There is however, a weak association between scales measuring barriers related to feeling disapproval from family and friends and barriers related to a restricted job market. Furthermore, the CBI scales reveal expected group differences that contribute to its validity; these include the differences between men and women and between members of

different racial-ethnic majority and minority groups. It is thus clear that continued attention should be given to these variables.

**Table 3.1: Characteristics of the 13 CBI-R Scales**

Scale	No. Of Items	Alpha	M	SD	Correlation Between Versions
Sex discrimination	7	.86	4.33	1.29	.96
Lack of confidence	4	.77	4.02	1.34	.93
Multiple-role conflict	8	.78	4.20	1.02	.95
Conflict between Children & career Demands	7	.75	3.67	1.03	.97
Racial discrimination	6	.84	4.41	1.35	.84
Inadequate preparation	5	.85	4.36	1.33	.72
Disapproval by Significant others	3	.64	3.04	1.31	1.00
Decision-making Difficulties	8	.83	4.25	1.15	.83
Dissatisfaction with career	5	.79	4.49	1.22	.91
Discouraged from Choosing non-Traditional careers	5	.75	3.03	1.16	.88
Disability/health concerns	3	.76	4.23	1.51	.95
Job market constraints	4	.68	4.38	1.18	New scale
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	5	.64	4.37	1.06	New scale

Source: (Swanson, Daniels & Tokar (1996, p. 226)

#### ***3.2.3.4.1 Rationale for using the CBI-R***

The Career Barriers Inventory measures the potential impacts of career barriers on the careers of the participants in the study. The CBI-R is considered to be the most appropriate instrument to gather the required information as it measures both the dependent and independent variables required for the research. According to Swanson and Tokar (1991b), the CBI-R is a multi-dimensional self-report instrument designed to tap into a broad domain of barriers that may occur across a range of career-related events. Validation studies on the CBI-R show it has appropriate reliability and validity properties.

### **3.3 STATISTICAL METHODS**

In order to simplify the processing of raw data, questionnaires were precoded. For the purpose of this study a quantitative methodological approach as opposed to a qualitative approach was utilised. The data which was obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Various statistical procedures were used to analyse the data namely, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

#### **3.3.1 Descriptive Statistics**

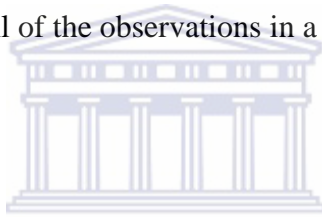
Descriptive statistics are statistical computations describing either the characteristics of a sample or the relationship amongst variables in a sample. They summarise a set of sample observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Descriptive statistics are reported in the form of frequencies, means and standard deviations for the demographic characteristics of the sample who partook in the study.

##### ***3.3.1.1 Frequencies***

According to Sekaran (2001), the number of times various subcategories of a certain phenomenon occurs, from which the percentage and cumulative percentage of their occurrence of the category can be calculated is referred to as frequencies. Frequencies are generally obtained on a nominally scaled variable. Variables will therefore be grouped in various non-overlapping subcategories.

### **3.3.1.2 Mean**

The mean can be defined as a set of values in the total sum of all values divided by the total number of measurements; it is also referred to as the average. In other words the mean is a measure of central tendency that puts forward a general picture of the data without necessarily inundating one with all of the observations in a data set (Sekaran, 2001).



### **3.3.1.3 Standard deviation**

The standard deviation refers to the square root of the variance. It is another measure of dispersion for interval and ratio scaled data; it offers an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data. The standard deviation and mean are generally considered to be a very useful tool (Sekaran, 2001).

## **3.3.2 Inferential Statistics**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), inferential statistics are used to make inferences or judgements about a larger population based on the data collected from a small sample drawn from the population.

T-tests and Analysis of Variance were the inferential techniques conducted to test the hypotheses under investigation.

### **3.3.2.1 T – Test**

The T-test is used to determine the differences in perceptions between males and females, as well as the differences between couples with and without children. According to Sekaran (2001), T-Tests allow the researcher to determine whether there are significant mean differences between two groups with regard to a particular variable interest. T – Tests are used with nominal data that are split into two sub-groups.

### **3.3.2.2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

According to Sekaran (2001), analysis of variance (ANOVA) can be used to examine the significant mean differences among more than two groups on an interval or ratio-scaled dependent variable. The results obtained from ANOVA demonstrate whether or not the means of the various groups are significantly different from one another, as shown by the *F* statistic. The *F* statistic shows whether two sample variances differ from each other or if they are from the same population. The *F* distribution is a probability distribution of sample variances and the family of distributions changes with the changes in the sample size.

In this study, the analysis of variance was used to determine whether significant differences regarding perceptions of career barriers based on biographical factors such as age and race exist.

## **3.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

The chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodology used in the study. It also described the population from which the sample was drawn, outlined procedures followed to gather and collate the data. Motivation for using the Career Barriers Inventory

(Revised), as well as its reliability and validity properties was reported on. Furthermore, the statistical methods used to analyse the data were delineated.

The next ensuing chapter provides detailed analyses of the results of the study.

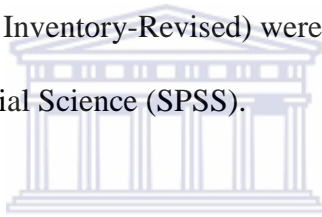


## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the results pertaining to the study and provides an explanation thereof. The chapter commences with an overview of the most salient sample characteristics depicted in graphical format. The presentation proceeds with an analysis of the descriptive statistics of the variables being investigated. To facilitate ease in conducting the empirical analyses, the results of the descriptive analyses are presented first, followed by the inferential statistical analyses. The data obtained from the questionnaires (namely, demographic questionnaire and Career Barriers Inventory-Revised) were statistically analysed by means of the Statistical package for the Social Science (SPSS).



#### **4.2 RESULTS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

WESTERN CAPE

##### **4.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

According to Sekaran (2001), descriptive statistics entails raw data being transformed into a form that would present information to describe a set of factors in a situation. The raw data collected is ordered and manipulated to do so. These are described below:

###### **4.2.1.1 Biographical characteristics**

This section highlights the descriptive statistics obtained from the self-developed demographic questionnaire. The demographic variables included are:

- Gender of the respondents
- Age of the respondents

- Race of the respondents
- Marital status of the respondents
- Respondents' partners share in household chores
- Number of children respondents' have in the household
- Respondent's highest qualification
- Department respondent's work in
- Whether respondent's current job meets their expectations and
- Whether respondent's career development in the organisation have been hindered because of their dual-career couple status

The descriptive statistics are presented and discussed in the form of frequencies and percentages. It focuses on the above-mentioned variables and are presented in the form of graphs on the ensuing pages.

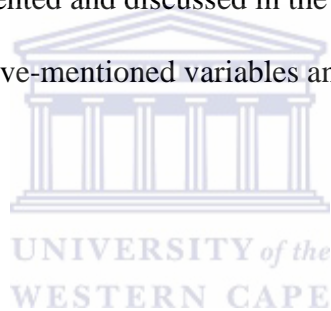




Figure 4.1 provides a graphic representation of the distribution of the sample based on gender

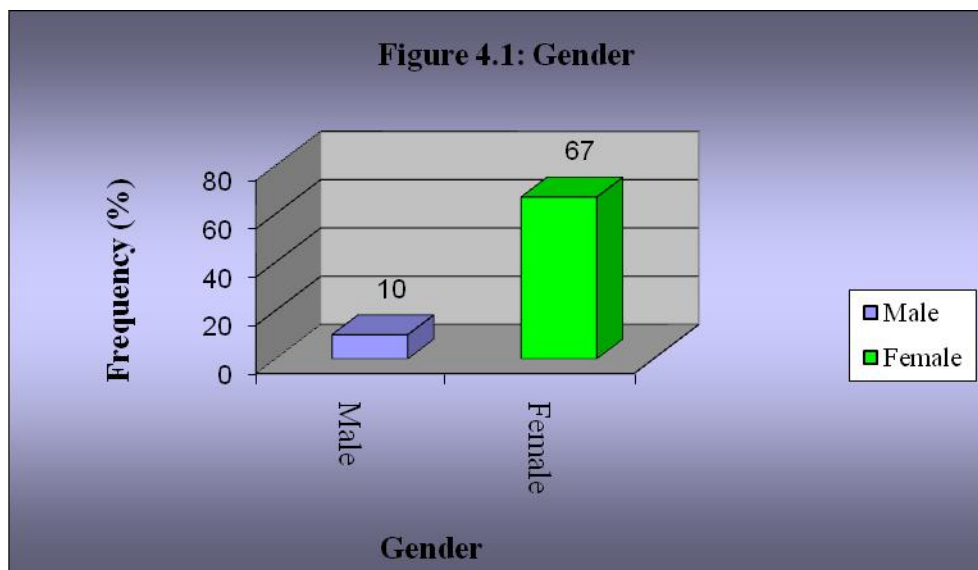


Figure 4.1 reflects the gender composition of the respondents at the organisation where the research was conducted. From the frequency distribution presented in the above graph it can be seen that 87% (n=67) of the participants were female and 13% (n=10) male. The high number of females compared to males could be attributed to the fact that the retail organisation comprises of more females.

Figure 4.2 provides a graphic representation of the distribution of the sample with regard to age

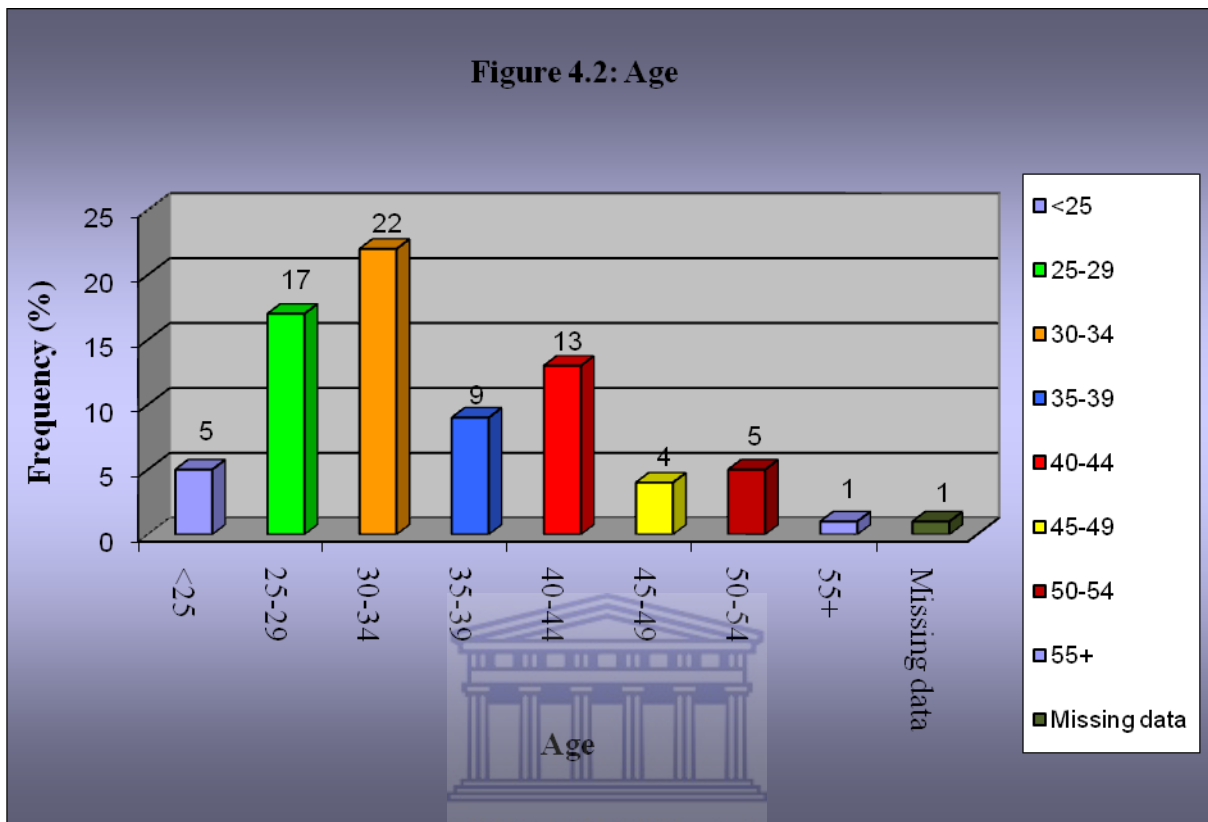


Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of the respondents in the sample (28.6%; n=22) are in the 30 to 34 age group. This category is followed by 22.1% (n=17) in the 25 to 29 age group, 16.9% (n=13) are in the 40 to 44 age group, 11.7% (n=9) are in the 35 to 39 age group and respondents in both respectively the 50 to 54 age group and younger than 25 age group consist of 6.5% (n=5) respectively. Whilst, 5.2% (n =4) are in the 45 to 49 age group and only 1.3% (n=1) in the 55 years and older age group. One respondent did not indicate their age.

Figure 4.3 provides a graphic representation of the distribution of the sample based on race

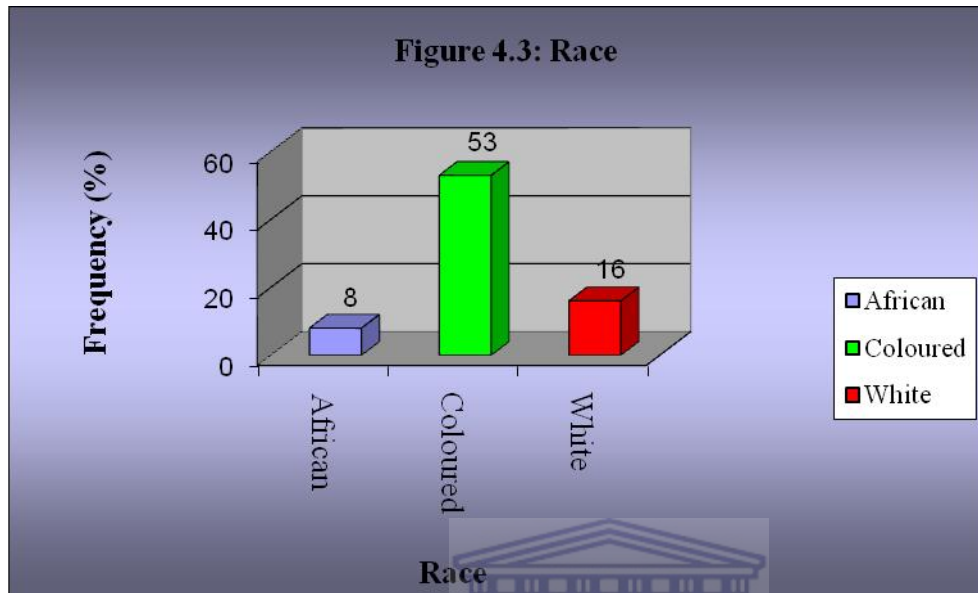
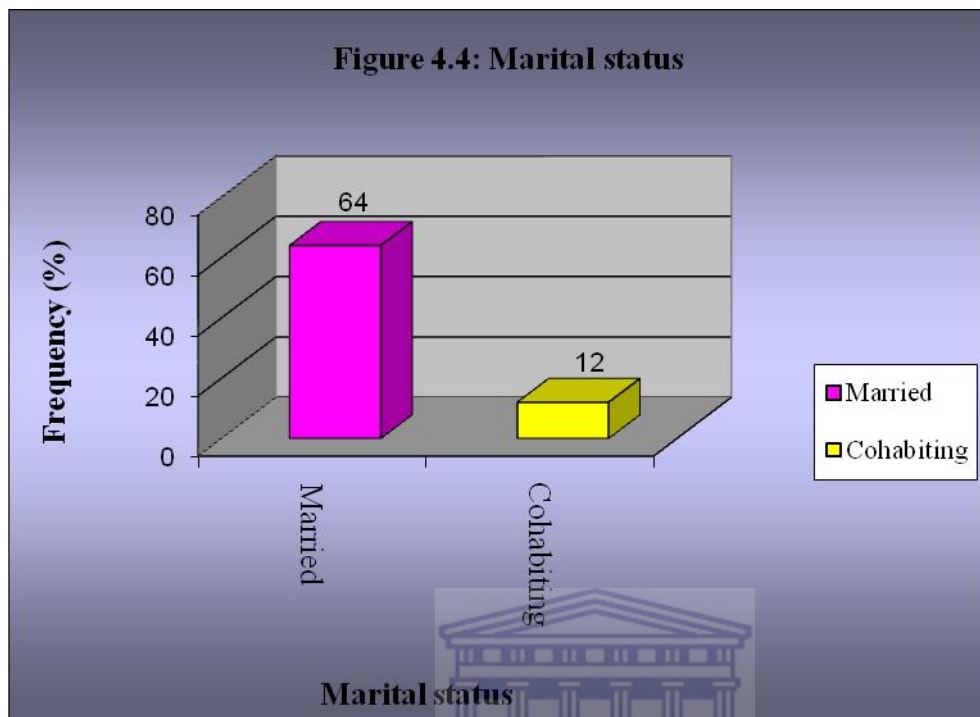


Figure 4.3 illustrates the racial composition of the sample. The Coloured group was the largest representative group (68.8%; n=53), followed by 20.8% (n=16) of the respondents being White. The least represented was the African group (10.4%; n=8).

Figure 4.4 provides a graphic representation of the marital status of the sample.



As can be seen in Figure 4.4, the majority of the sample (83.1%; n=64) are married and 15.6% (n=12) are cohabiting. One respondent (1.3%) did not indicate their marital status.

Figure 4.5 provides a graphic representation of the share in household chores respondents' partners fulfil

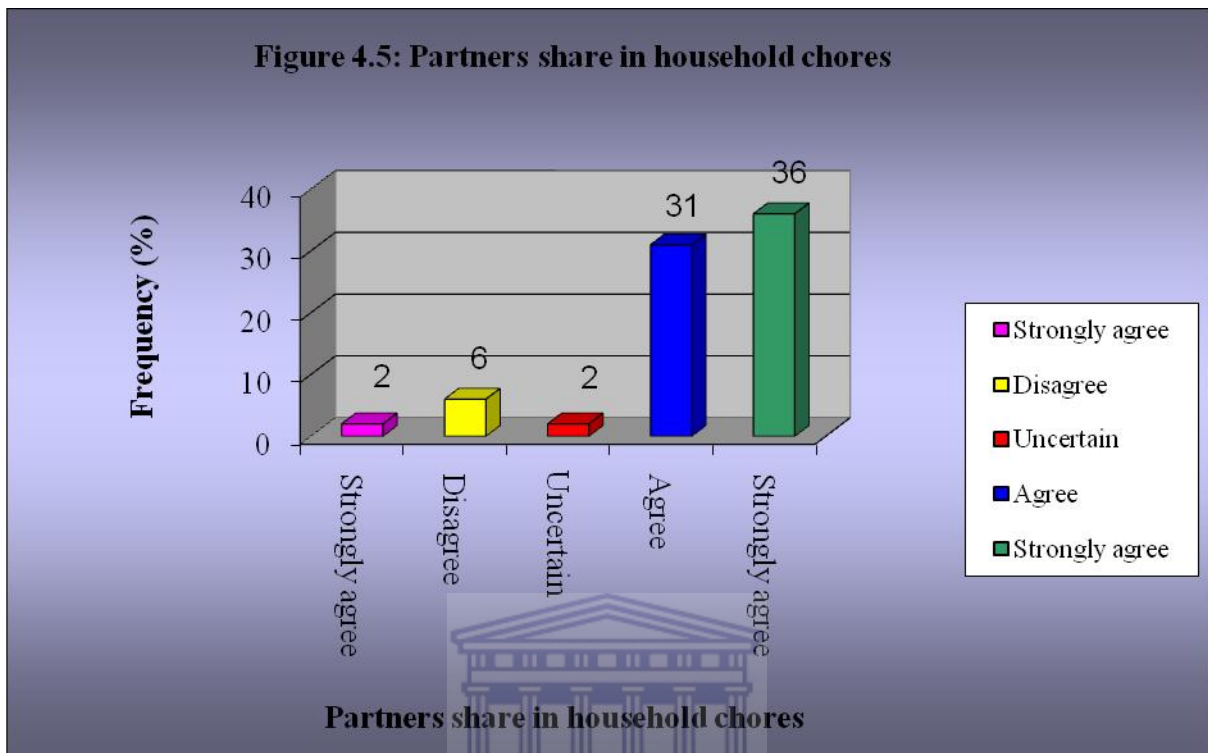


Figure 4.5 illustrates that majority of respondents strongly agree that their partners assist with household chores (46.8%; n=36) and 31 (40.3%) of the respondents agree that their partners assist with household chores. However six (7.7%) respondents disagree that their partners assist with household chores and two (2.6%) respondents strongly disagree that their partners assist with household chores. Two (2.6%) of the respondents indicated they were uncertain as to whether their partners assisted with household chores.

Figure 4.6 provides a graphic representation of the amount of children respondents have

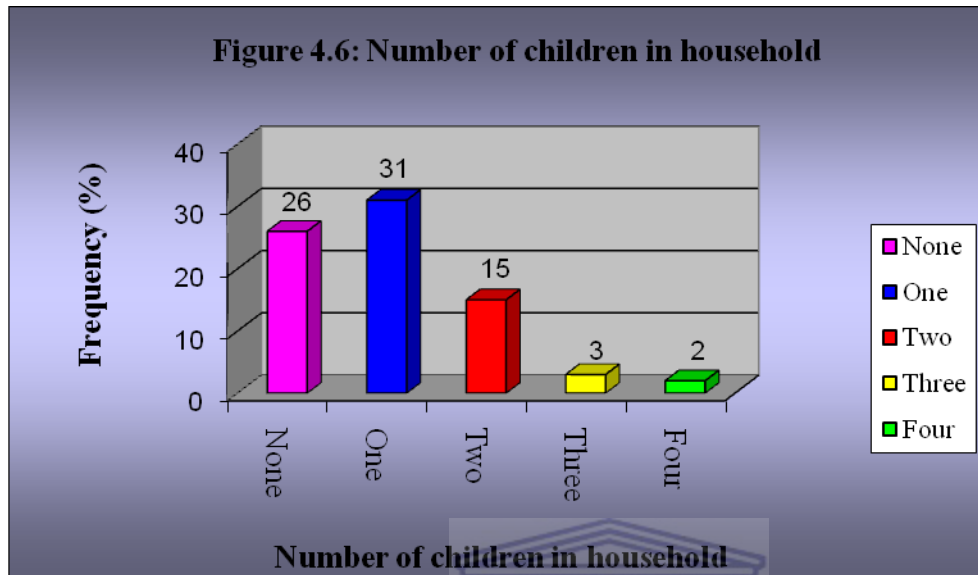


Figure 4.6 indicates that 33.8% (n=26) of the respondents do not have children, whereas the majority (66.3%; n=51) of the respondents have either one or more children. Of those respondents who have children, the majority (n=31 or 40.3%) of them have one child, 19.5% (n=15) have two children, 3.9% (n=3) have three children and 2.6% (n=2) have four children.

Figure 4.7 provides a graphic representation of respondents' highest qualification obtained

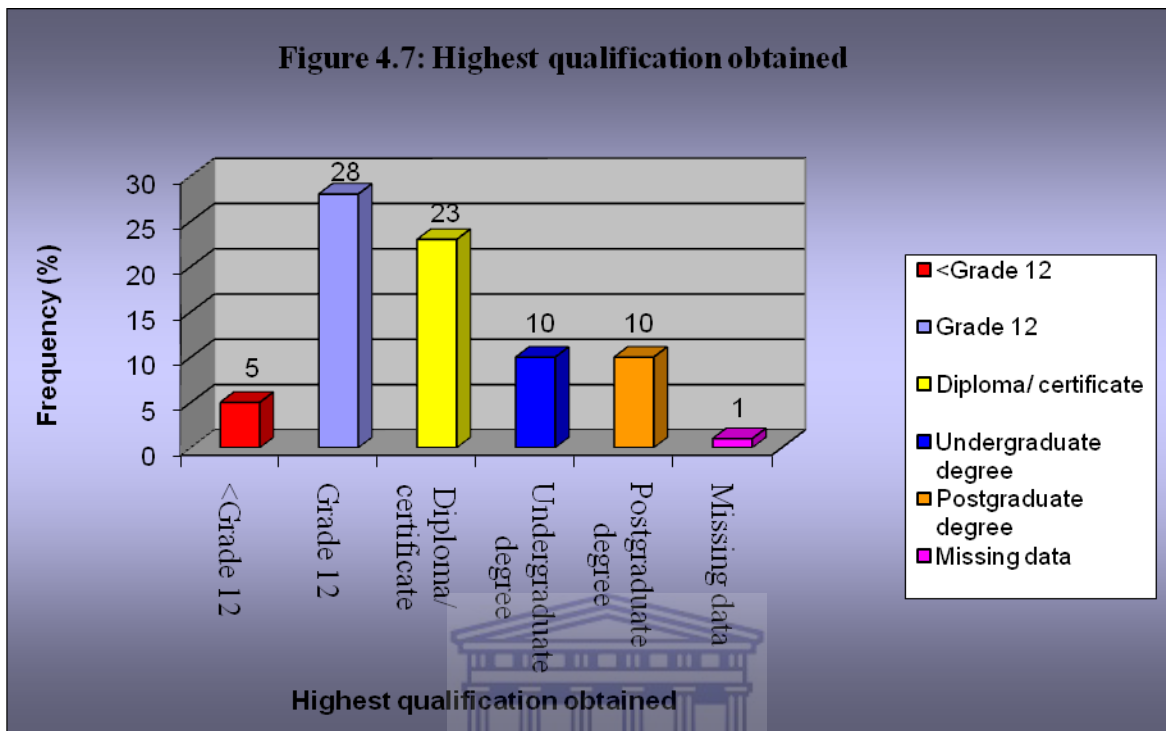


Figure 4.7 shows that the majority of the respondents' (n=28; 36.4%) have a grade 12 qualification and 29.9% (23) have a diploma or certificate. Ten (13%) respondents have an undergraduate degree and ten (13%) have a postgraduate degree. Only five (6.5%) of the respondents have a qualification lower than grade12 and one (1.3%) respondent did not indicate their highest qualification obtained.

Figure 4.8 provides a graphic representation of the distribution of the sample based on department.

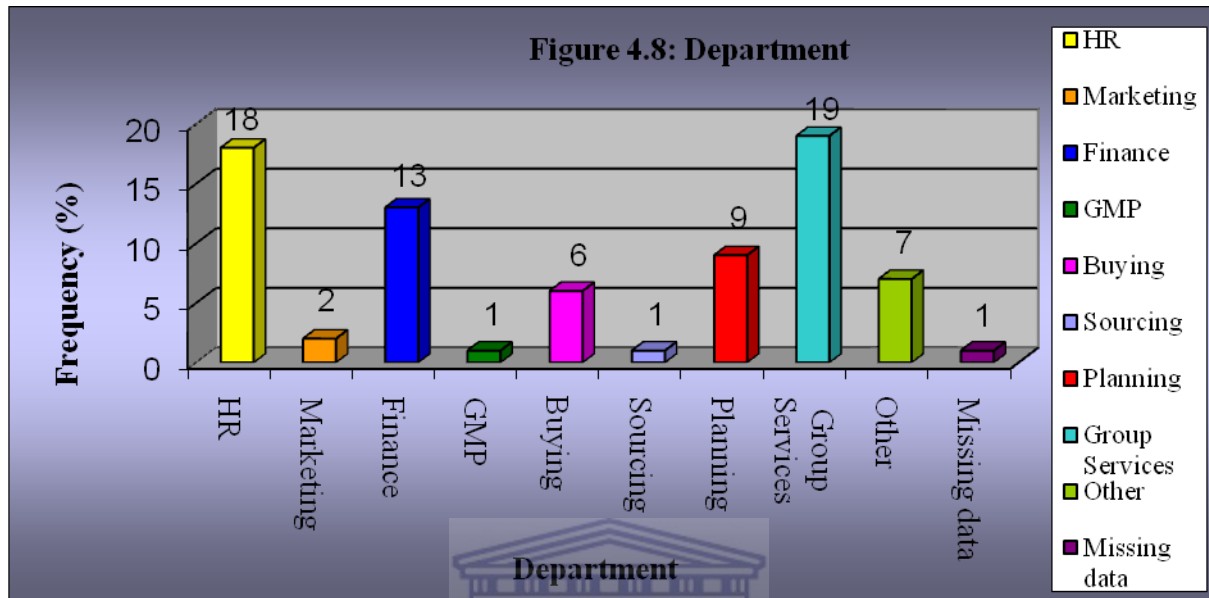
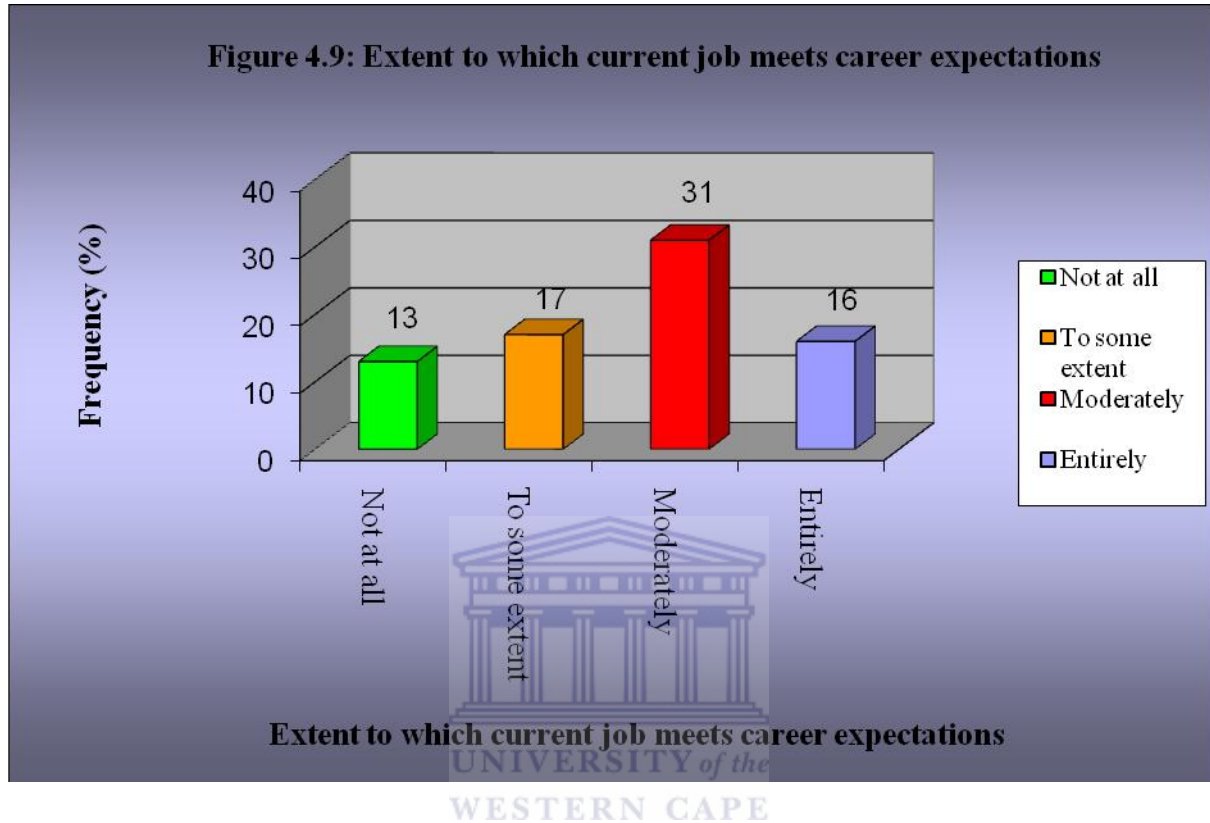


Figure 4.8 represents the departments in which the respondents' work. The majority of the sample (24.7%; n=19) work in Group Services, 23.4% (n=18) in the HR department, 16.9% (n=13) in the Finance department and 11.7% (n=9) work in the Planning department. Whilst, 9.1% (n=7) work in other departments not mentioned above, 7.8% (n=6) work in the Buying department and 2.6% (n=2) respondents work in Marketing. Only 1 respondent (1.3%) works in Group Merchandise Procurement (GMP) and Sourcing and one respondent (1.3%) did not indicate which department they work in.



Figure 4.9 provides a graphic representation of whether respondents' current job meets their career expectations



As can be seen in Figure 4.9 above, the majority of the sample (40.3%; n=31) indicate that their current job moderately meets their career expectations, seventeen (22.1%) feel that their current job meets their career expectations to some extent and sixteen respondents (20.8%) say that their career expectations are being met entirely by their current job. Thirteen respondents (16.9%) feel that their current job does not meet their career expectations at all.

**Figure 4.10 provides a graphic representation as to whether respondents perceive their career development within their current organisation to be hindered by their dual-career couple status**

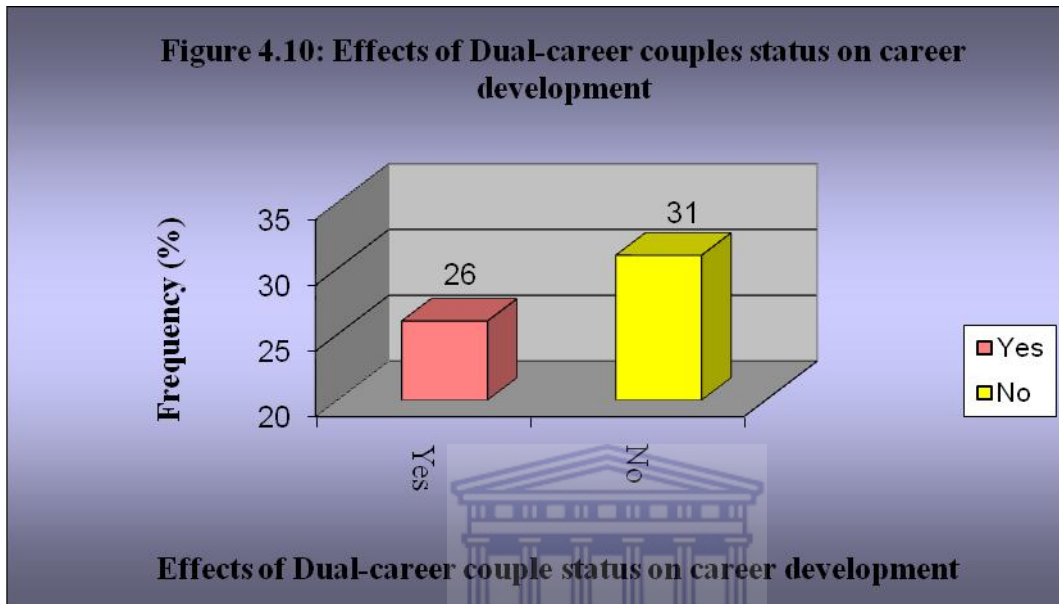


Figure 4.10 represents respondents' views regarding how their career development is affected by their dual-career couple status within their organisation. The majority of the sample that is (93.5%; n=72) indicate that their career development has not been hindered due to their dual-career couple status, whereas only three (3.9%) feel that their career development has been hindered due to their dual-career couple status.

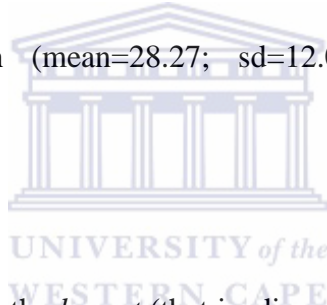
#### 4.2.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE CAREER BARRIERS INVENTORY- REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics (mean and standard deviation) for the Career Barriers  
Inventory-Revised**

Career barriers	Mean	Standard deviation
Conflict between children & career Demands	26.26	8.688
Decision-making difficulties	32.57	10.400
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	18.88	6.806
Disability/health concerns	12.57	5.298
Disapproval by significant others	8.87	4.473
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	16.03	7.220
Dissatisfaction with career	23.99	7.518
Inadequate preparation	20.56	8.043
Job market constraints	17.30	5.978
Lack of confidence	17.32	5.926
Multiple-role conflict	33.09	11.385
Racial discrimination	26.45	10.417
Sex discrimination	28.27	12.037

Based on the dimensions presented in the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised, Table 4.1 indicates the means and standard deviations for each of the thirteen scales, namely, conflict between children and career demands, decision making difficulties, difficulties with network/socialisation, disability/health concerns, disapproval by significant others, discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers, dissatisfaction with career, inadequate preparation, job market constraints, lack of confidence, multiple-role conflict, racial discrimination and sex discrimination.

In terms of Table 4.1, the dimensions most *highly* rated as career barriers which respondents perceived and experienced in the organisation at which the research was undertaken were for: multiple-role conflict (mean=33.09; sd=11.385), decision-making difficulties (mean=32.57; sd=10.400), sex discrimination (mean=28.27; sd=12.037) and racial discrimination (mean=26.45; sd=10.417).



The dimensions which were rated the *lowest* (that is, dimension not considered to affect their career advancement) by respondents were: disapproval by significant others (mean=8.87; sd=4.473), disability/health concerns (mean=12.57; sd=5.298) and discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers (mean=16.03; sd=7.220).

### **4.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS**

In this section the results of the inferential statistics are presented. Based on the results obtained from the research, conclusions are drawn with respect to each hypothesis.

#### **4.3.1 T-Test**

***H1: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace.***

The results of the T-Test regarding the dimensions of the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised based on the gender of employees are presented in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Career barriers with respect to gender**

<b>Career barriers</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Conflict between children & career Demands	0.095	0.759
Decision-making difficulties	2.308	0.133
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	1.691	0.197
Disability/health concerns	0.762	0.386
Disapproval by significant others	0.761	0.386
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	0.29	0.866
Dissatisfaction with career	1.797	0.184
Inadequate preparation	0.185	0.668
Job market constraints	2.880	0.094
Lack of confidence	6.524	0.013
Multiple-role conflict	0.048	0.826
Racial discrimination	2.014	0.160
Sex discrimination	0.210	0.648

**\*p < 0.05**

Table 4.2 depicts the results of the t-test with respect to gender and career barriers. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of males and females regarding lack of confidence as a career barrier (F=6.524; p=0.013). However, there are no significant differences in perceptions regarding any of the other career barriers namely; conflict between children and career demands (F=0.095; p=0.759), decision making difficulties (F=2.308; p=0.759), difficulties with networking/socialisation (F=1.691; p=0.386), disability/health concerns (F=0.762; p=0.386), disapproval from significant others

( $F=0.761$ ;  $p=0.386$ ), discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers ( $F= 0.029$ ;  $p=0.866$ ) and dissatisfaction with career ( $F=1.797$ ;  $p=0.184$ ) based on gender. Furthermore, there are no significant differences in perceptions based on gender also for inadequate preparation ( $F=0.185$ ;  $p=0.668$ ), job market constraint ( $F=2.880$ ;  $p=0.094$ ), sex discrimination ( $F=0.210$ ;  $p=0,648$ ).

The hypothesis is therefore partially accepted as there is a statistically significant difference regarding the perceptions amongst males and females in terms of lack of confidence as a career barrier.

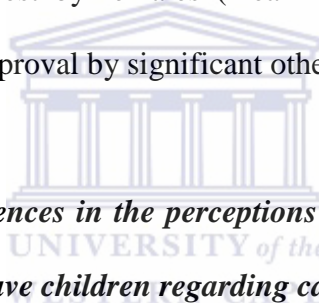
**Table 4.3: Ranking of career barriers with regards to the differences between males and females**

Career barriers	Male			Female		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
Decision-making difficulties	33.30	7.484	1	32.46	10.809	2
Multiple-role conflict	33.00	11.146	2	33.10	11.502	1
Racial discrimination	31.20	7.406	3	27.94	10.656	3
Sex discrimination	30.50	12.730	4	25.75	11.995	5
Dissatisfaction with career	26.20	6.179	5	23.66	7.682	6
Conflict between children & career Demands	26.10	7.738	6	26.28	8.874	4
Inadequate preparation	20.20	7.613	7	20.61	8.159	7
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	19.00	4.899	8	18.87	7.075	8
Lack of confidence	17.60	2.797	9	17.28	6.274	10
Job market constraints	17.20	4.131	10	17.31	6.228	9
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	15.40	6.931	11	16.12	7.308	11
Disability/Health	14.80	4.290	12	12.24	5.380	12

<b>concerns</b>						
<b>Disapproval by significant others</b>	9.60	4.088	13	8.87	4.546	13

Figure 4.3 presents the rankings (from highest to lowest) off the different career barriers perceived by males and females respectively as the barriers considered to impede their career advancement. The career barriers that were rated the highest for females were multiple-role conflict (mean=33.10; sd=11.502) and decision making difficulties (mean=32.46; sd=10.809). Similarly, for males it was decision-making difficulties (mean=33.30; sd=7.484) and multiple-role conflict (mean=33.00; sd=11.146).

The career barrier rated the lowest by females (mean=8.87; sd=4.546) as well as males (mean=9.60; sd=4.088) was disapproval by significant others.



***H2: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have children and those who do not have children regarding career barriers in the workplace.***

The results of the T-Test regarding the dimensions of the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised based on the parental demands of employees are presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Career barriers with respect to the number of children (parental demand)**

Career barriers	F	Sig
Conflict between children & career Demands	0.083	0.773
Decision-making difficulties	0.931	0.338
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	0.700	0.405
Disability/health concerns	0.322	0.572
Disapproval by significant others	4.625	0.035
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	0.160	0.690
Dissatisfaction with career	0.050	0.823
Inadequate preparation	1.165	0.284
Job market constraints	0.768	0.384
Lack of confidence	0.004	0.951
Multiple-role conflict	1.669	0.200
Racial discrimination	0.003	0.953
Sex discrimination	0.941	0.335

\*p < 0.05

Table 4.4 illustrates the results of the t-test in terms of the differences amongst employees with and those without children with respect to career barriers. The results indicate that a statistical significant difference in perceptions exist between employees with and those without children for only one career barrier namely, disapproval by significant others (F=4.625; p=0.035). There were no statistical significant differences for lack of confidence (F=0.004; p=0.951), conflict between children and career demands (F=0.083; p=0.774), decision making difficulties (F=0.931; p=0.338), difficulties with networking/socialisation (F=0.700; p=0.405), disability/health concerns (F=0.322; p=0.572), discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers (F=0.160; p=0.690) and dissatisfaction with career (F=0.50; p=0.823). Furthermore, there are also no statistical significant differences in perceptions for inadequate preparation (F=1.165; p=0.284), job market constraint (F=0.768; p=0.384), racial



discrimination (F=0.03; p=0,953), sex discrimination (F=0.941; p=0.335) and multiple-role conflict (F=1.669; p=0.200) in the perceptions of employees with and those without children.

**The hypothesis is therefore partially accepted**, as there is a statistical significant difference between dual-career couples with and those without children in terms of disapproval by significant others.

#### 4.3.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

*H3: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace.*

The results of the one-way ANOVA regarding the dimensions of the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised based on the employees' race are presented in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: ANOVA - Career barriers with respect to race**

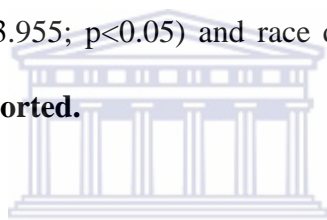
Career barriers	F	Sig
Conflict between children & career Demands	0.881	0.419
Decision-making difficulties	2.674	0.076
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	4.305	0.017
Disability/health concerns	0.914	0.405
Disapproval by significant others	1.203	0.306
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	1.700	0.190
Dissatisfaction with career	1.067	0.349
Inadequate preparation	2.002	0.142
Job market constraints	0.022	0.978
Lack of confidence	3.955	0.023
Multiple-role conflict	1.564	0.216
Racial discrimination	4.580	0.013
Sex discrimination	1.410	0.251

\*p < 0.05

Table 4.5 depicts the results of the ANOVA with respect to perceptions of career barriers based on employees' race. The results indicate that there are no significant differences for the following career barriers: Conflict between children and career demands ( $F=0.881$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), decision making difficulties ( $F=2.674$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), disability/health concerns ( $F=0.914$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), disapproval by significant others ( $F=1.203$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers ( $F=1.700$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), dissatisfaction with career ( $F=1.067$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), inadequate preparation ( $F=2.002$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), job market constraints ( $F=0.022$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), multiple-role conflict ( $F=1.564$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) and sex discrimination ( $F=1.410$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

However, the results also show that there are significant differences in the following career barriers based on employee's race: Difficulties with networking/socialisation ( $F=4.305$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), lack of confidence ( $F=3.955$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and race discrimination ( $F=4.580$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

**The hypothesis is partially supported.**



***H4: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace.***

The results of the one-way ANOVA regarding the dimensions of the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised based on the age of employees are presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: ANOVA - Career barriers with respect to age**

Career barriers	F	Sig
Conflict between children & career Demands	0.865	0.550
Decision-making difficulties	0.579	0.792
Difficulties with networking/socialisation	0.796	0.608
Disability/health concerns	0.601	0.774
Disapproval by significant others	1.268	0.275
Discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers	0.861	0.554
Dissatisfaction with career	0.292	0.966
Inadequate preparation	0.925	0.501

Job market constraints	1.151	0.342
Lack of confidence	0.862	0.552
Multiple-role conflict	0.837	0.573
Racial discrimination	0.740	0.656
Sex discrimination	0.860	0.554

\*p < 0.05

Table 4.6 provides the results with respect to ANOVA depicting differences with respect to perceptions of career barriers based on the employees' age. The results indicate that there are no statistical significant differences between the perceptions of employees based on age for any of the career barriers: Conflict between children and career demands (F=0.865; p=0.550), decision making difficulties (F=0.579; p=0.792), difficulties with network/socialisation (F=0.796; p=0.608), disability/health concerns (F=0.601; p=0.774), disapproval by significant others (F=1.268; p=0.275), discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers (F=0.861; p=0.554), dissatisfaction with career (F=0.292; p=0.966), inadequate preparation (F=0.925; p=0.501), job market constraints (F=1.151; p=0.342), lack of confidence (F=0.862; p=0.552), multiple-role conflict (F=0.837; p=0.573), racial discrimination (F=0.740; p=0.656) and sex discrimination (F=0.860; p=0.554).

**The hypothesis is therefore rejected**, as there are no significant differences regarding career barriers based on employees' age.

#### 4.4 RELIABILITY STATISTICS

**Table 4.7: Reliability of the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized item	N of item
0.974	0.974	69

According to Sekaran (2001), Cronbach Coefficient Alpha is a reliability coefficient that can be used to indicate how well the item in a set is positively correlated to each other. Table 4.7 indicates that the Cronbach Alpha is 0.974 which is an indication that internal consistency is high. Furthermore, it shows that the CBI-R reliability is good, as it is above 0.80.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an overview of the most salient findings obtained based on the empirical analysis of the data. The results of the study was objectively presented by using descriptive statistics to describe the results and inferential statistics to make inferences about the characteristics of the sample solicited to participate in the study. This enabled the researcher to identify significant differences between the variables in the study and to draw conclusions with respect to each hypothesis being investigated.

In the following chapter the findings will be discussed and existing research findings will be integrated with the results emanating from the current study to draw comparisons. As there is a paucity of literature specifically in the retail environment, reference will be made to research conducted in other environments as well. The chapter will conclude by highlighting the limitations, drawing conclusions and putting forth recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the prominent findings of the research in relation to the hypotheses and relevant research available. Due to the paucity of research in the retail industry, studies conducted in other areas are also made reference to. The discussion includes information on the demographics of the sample, descriptive outcomes for the dimensions of career barriers, results obtained from the inferential statistics for the dimensions of career barriers and differences between biographical variables and career barriers. Furthermore, this chapter will also elucidate some of the limitations of the study, suggestions for future research will be made and recommendations for the organisation will also be addressed. The information and discussions presented in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted. Conclusions are drawn based on the obtained results.

Today very few families reflect the make-up of a typical family, as both partners are normally employed (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). More and more married women are working outside the home for remuneration. This type of restructuring of personal relationships has given rise to the surfacing of dual-career couples (Naidoo & Jano, 2002). These changing demographics have a considerable impact on the nature of people's careers (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). According to Zunker (2006), an individual's family has a great impact on their career development and a number of career development theorists have viewed this as an issue.

In light of the above, the purpose of this study was to investigate dual-career couples' perceptions of career barriers. The following hypotheses were investigated:

- There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have and who do not have children regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace.
- There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace.

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.2.1 DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS**

The sample consisted of a hundred and twenty-five (125) men and women, permanent and contract employees within the following departments: Human Resources, Marketing, Logistics, Finance, Group Merchandise Procurement (GMP), Buying, Sourcing, Audit, Planning and Group Services in a large retail organisation. With reference to Figure 4.1-4.6, the majority of the respondents were female (n=67; 87%). This could be attributed to the fact that more females than males are employed in the organisation at head office in the Western Cape region. The majority of the respondents (n=19; 24.7%) work in the Group Services Department. The sample was more representative of employees between the age group of 30 and 34 (n=22; 28.6%). Most of the respondents were married (n=64; 83.1%) as appose to being in a cohabiting relationship with the majority of the respondents having children (n=51;

66.3%). Furthermore, fifty-three (or 68.8%) of the respondents were Coloured which could be as a result of the representivity of the Western Cape region.

With respect to the dimensions of career barriers assessed by the Career Barriers Inventory-Revised, the results indicate that respondents perceived multiple-role conflict (mean=33.09; sd=11.385), decision-making difficulties (mean=32.57; sd=10.400), sex discrimination (mean=28.27; sd=12.037) and racial discrimination (mean=26.45; sd=10.417) as the career barriers that would affect their career advancement the most.

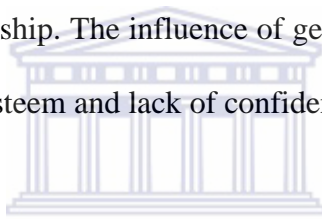
Conversely, the results also indicate that disapproval by significant others (mean=8.87; sd=4.473), disability/health concerns (mean=12.57; sd=5.298) and discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers (mean=16.03; sd=7.220) are perceived as the career barriers that would least affect their career advancement.

## **5.2.2 INFERENTIAL RESULTS**

### **5.2.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 1: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding career barriers in the workplace.**

Findings according to the T-test indicate that the hypothesis is partially accepted because there is a statistically significant difference regarding the perceptions of males and females with regard to lack of confidence as a career barrier. Furthermore, the findings of the present study indicate that the career barriers that were rated the highest for females were multiple-role conflict and decision making difficulties. Similarly, for males it was decision-making difficulties and multiple-role conflict.

Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) investigated what female teachers considered barriers to their advancement to headship positions in Zimbabwean primary schools. The primary focus of their study was to identify the factors perceived by women school-heads to be causes of persistent under-representation of women in school headship positions. The study included a sample of nine experienced women school-heads who were interviewed while four women deputy heads and nine senior teachers participated in three focus group discussions. The findings of the study revealed that even though most of the women teachers were qualified for promotion to school headship positions, they did not make an effort to apply for those positions and as a result were still class teachers. The results further showed that gender stereotypes were one of the main reasons for the persistent under-representation of women in primary school headship. The influence of gender role stereotypes was found to manifest in the form of low self esteem and lack of confidence to pursue leadership roles.



Fedyashina and Castagnac's (2002) research further supports the findings of the present study. Their study which included influential Russian women had five main aims: (i) to determine the factors affecting men and women's careers in Russia, (ii) understanding incentives which motivate men and women to reach top executive positions, (iii) identifying internal and external barriers hindering the career development of both genders, (iv) identify typically "female" career development barriers and (v) determining what the main gender-related social stereotypes affecting career development are. The findings of their study indicated that Russian executives, both men and women, believe professionalism and competency (97%), personal qualities (91%), commitment (89%) and education (77%) are ways in which to advance their careers. The study also revealed significant differences between Russian and foreign-owned companies' approaches to business operations, selection of managers and career development. Additionally, results showed that stereotypes about



women managers continue to play a significant role in Russia's business environment (that is, 45% of the respondents agreed that it was impossible for women to combine a successful career with an adequate family life, while 36% believed that by pursuing success in business they would no longer be viewed as women). Furthermore, findings pointed out that pressure from family and friends, expectations of their peers, lack of self-confidence and stereotypes programmed by their upbringing may significantly affect career aspirations. Their study shows that women more often than men (that is, 50% females and 24% males) view the underestimation of own leadership potential and lack of confidence as an internal barrier.

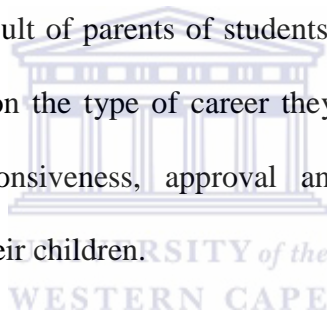
Conversely, Premadasa, Shehab, Al-Jarallah and Thalib (2008) conducted a study to establish the perceptions of new medical graduates regarding the performance of core clinical skills during training and confidence of performing them later. The study also focused on whether differences existed in terms of confidence based on gender. The study involved a sample of 91 graduates who completed a questionnaire. The results indicated that most of the respondents felt confident performing routine skills; approximately two thirds had performed generic skills related to emergency resuscitation, of which half of them were confident in performing them in the future. A third of the respondents felt confident in performing artificial ventilation and endotracheal intubation. The findings also indicated that the variation in perceptions was not significant in terms of gender. The study concluded that training needs to be closely monitored for interns who are not competent so it can be identified early in order to take corrective measures. The confidence of graduates to perform certain procedures would largely affect their progression within their profession.

In the present study no statistically significant difference regarding the perceptions of males and females were found for any of the remaining (12) barriers, namely: conflict between children and career demands, decision-making difficulties, difficulties with

networking/socialisation, disability/health concerns, disapproval by significant others, discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers, dissatisfaction with career, inadequate preparation, job market constraints, multiple-role conflict, racial discrimination and sex discrimination. Some of these barriers (where research were found) will be addressed in terms of previous studies conducted.

Rowe and Crafford (2003) conducted a qualitative study in the investment banking industry to explore the barriers to career advancement for professional women. The key themes that were focused on in the study were structure of society, embodiment, male domination, support structures and networking, as well as an additional theme entitled 'If the shoe fits'; which links the aforementioned factors and forms the conclusion. The study was conducted in an organisation in the investment banking industry and twelve participants were selected bearing in mind differences in gender, race and age. Each of these respondents were interviewed. The findings indicated support structure was one of the predominant career barriers to women's career advancement. Often when women are in competition with their support structure (that is, spouse or other females) only one of the two are able to be successful. The general issue confronted in most of the interviews was that women need to support each other (as well as gain the support of their male colleagues) through their different circumstances in order to build a solid and credible foundation to work from to advance their careers. Networking was identified as another barrier to career advancement. Networking is an essential part of building relationships as it allows an individual to side with influential and powerful people. Not positioning or profiling oneself to build the correct networks can be a career barrier. The results indicated that men are more likely to profile themselves correctly than females, as women rarely discuss their achievements or market themselves correctly.

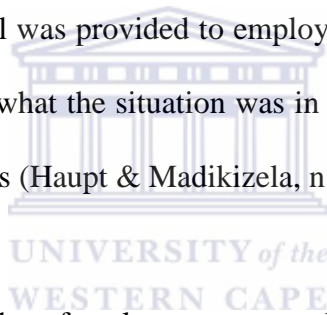
Salami's (2002) study which consisted of 340 female students from 10 tertiary institutions in South-West Nigeria investigated the impact of culture, family and individual differences on the choice of gender-dominated occupations amongst female students in tertiary institutions. This study specifically aimed to measure attitudes toward religion, need achievement, family involvement, socio-economic status and work values. The findings showed that family involvement will predict career choice. Furthermore, it indicated that students who scored high on parent's involvement chose male dominated occupations (that is, engineering). Various authors (Leong, 1993; Salami, 2004; Tang, Fouad & Smith, 1999; Uba & Olaniyi, 1991 cited in Salami, 2002) agree with the aforementioned findings. The authors postulate that these results may be as a result of parents of students studying providing their children with the necessary information on the type of career they want them to pursue as well as providing encouragement, responsiveness, approval and financial support in matters concerned with career plans of their children.



A study was conducted to analyse the factors influencing the South African women's choices of careers in construction. The study focused on the challenges women faced in construction which contribute to their choices of careers in a traditionally male-dominated industry. A purposive sampling approach was adopted in terms of a convenience sample where 1435 industry practitioners comprising of 141 first and final-year construction students and 17 professional women from the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces participated. The industry survey included 11 questions on aspects of gender practices and policies within their organisations. The findings revealed that women have a role to play in the construction industry and could build successful careers within the sector; however, entry into this

industry as a female was not easy given the various barriers due to an individual's gender (Haupt & Madikizela, n.d.).

When addressing various gender-based issues the following findings were highlighted: participants in the construction workshops indicated that nearly all the respondents reported that females were afforded the same rights, benefits and opportunities as males (92.2%). Similarly, most of them report that females were afforded equal advancement and promotion opportunities (87.6%). However, substantially fewer respondents indicated that funding was available and aimed at improving the status and qualifications of female employees (51.1%), 44.5% of respondents pointed out that written gender equity policies were in place and gender-based educational material was provided to employees (27.8%). Notably, nearly 25% of the respondents did not know what the situation was in their organisations with respect to gender-related issues and practices (Haupt & Madikizela, n.d.)



The student sample suggests that females are more likely to agree that women on construction sites were not respected to the same extent as men. Similarly, a correlation coefficient of -0.457 at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) suggests that females are more prone to disagree that women were more suited to administrative than production functions on construction sites. Furthermore, the weak correlation coefficient of -0.188 at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) implies that they were more likely to disagree that they were intimidated by there being more male consultants in the industry (Haupt & Madikizela, n.d.).

Lastly, the sample of professional women indicated that nearly all the women (94.1%) believed that women experienced discrimination while working in the construction industry. Approximately three-quarters (76.5%) indicated that such discrimination was more prevalent

on construction sites than in consultancies. Sixty-four point seven percent (64.7%) of the respondents agreed that women in the construction industry did not enjoy the same growth opportunities as their male counterparts. More than half (52.7%) of the participants indicated that pregnant women experienced discrimination which was more common in construction than other sectors. Additionally, it was found that more than half (53.0%) of the respondents had experienced discrimination at work and almost half (47%) reported that the contributions of their male counterparts were considered more important than their contributions. Furthermore, 41.2% respondents believed that the nature of the construction industry posed a threat to the career development of women in the sector (Haupt & Madikizela, n.d.).

Studies conducted confirm that women generally experience more discrimination in the workplace than men (Guttek, Cohen & Tsui, 1996). A comparative study was conducted on sixty-nine (69) men and women executives to explore the reason for “the opt-out revolution”. This term refers to the alarming talent drain of highly trained women. A qualitative methodology was used through the use of open ended questions. The results indicated that women reported greater barriers to career advancement, mentioning hindrance such as lack of general management or line experience (79% agreement), exclusion from informal networks (77% agreement), stereotypes about women’s roles and abilities (72% agreement), and failure of top leaders to assume accountability for women’s advancement (68% agreement). Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents agreed that “commitment to personal/family responsibilities” was the most important challenge for women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Conversely, De Villiers and Kotze (2003) conducted a qualitative study in a petroleum industry to ascertain how employees of a company define and experience the phenomenon of work-life balance, to identify the workplace determinants of work-life imbalance and to elicit

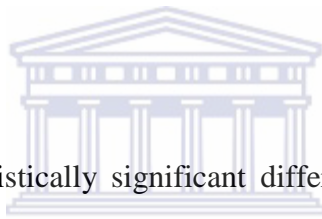
some solutions for the problem. Purposeful sampling was used to select 20 employees from various teams in the finance department. Interviews were conducted to gather data on the employees. The data revealed that work-life balance is a personal issue that varies across time. It was apparent from the respondents who participated in the study, that none of the varied responses could be attributed solely to gender but were influenced by individuals' prioritisation of roles, values and aspirations.

**5.2.2.2 HYPOTHESIS 2: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples who have and those who do not have children regarding career barriers in the workplace.**

The results of the present study indicate that the hypothesis is partially accepted, as disapproval by significant others was the only career barrier to have a statistically significant difference between dual-career couples with and those without children.

Galinsky (1999) conducted a study with 1000 children from grade 3 to grade 12 and asked them to evaluate their parents in 12 areas strongly linked to children's healthy development, school readiness and school success. The findings revealed that even though the amount of time children and parents spend together is very important, most children do not want more time spent with their parents, but instead children value the time they do spend together if it is not rushed but focussed and rich in shared activities. It was clear from the findings that children appreciated working parents efforts and the problem was not that parents work but how work affects parenting. It was also evident from the study that if working parents were aware that their children are positively affected by them working, they would be more likely to succeed in their careers.

McKay (2010) conducted a study which further supports the current study's findings. Her research focused on men and women who are facing a career crossroads by starting a family. The results of the study indicate that regardless of where working mothers are in their careers, they often find it hard to achieve a balance between work and family. By and large, women take on or are given more responsibility for their children or home responsibilities than men, which often leading to frustration and exhaustion. After working long hours mothers are often required to fulfil home and childcare responsibilities which can be difficult and often others opinions and disapproval make working parents feel even more guilty in this regard. This may result in working parents, especially mothers, to look for other alternatives such as reducing the amount of hours they work or working part-time, which may inevitably affect their career advancement.



The present study found no statistically significant difference between dual-career couple with and those without children for the remaining (12) barriers, namely: conflict between children and career demands, decision-making difficulties, difficulties with networking/socialisation, disability/health concerns, discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers, dissatisfaction with career, inadequate preparation, job market constraints, lack of confidence, multiple-role conflict, racial discrimination and sex discrimination. Comparisons will be made with the results of previous studies conducted with regard to those barriers found in literature.

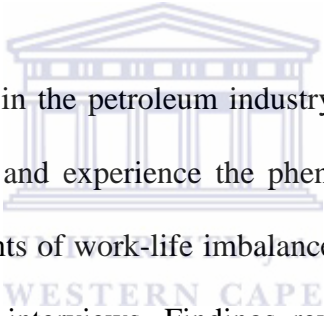
Contrary to the results of the current study, a previous study has shown that important differences are revealed between spouses/partners when couples have children. Individuals who have multiple career demands often generate role conflict and women with children are particularly prone to tensions between career demands and family responsibilities, which may adversely affect their career progression and work performance (Smith, 1997).

A study conducted by Metz (2005), also contradicts the findings of the present study. Their study was conducted to assess whether differences exist in the barriers reported and those barriers that relate to the managerial advancement of women with and those without children. Furthermore, their research examined whether having children influenced women's career advancement (that is, if it affected their person-situation factors such as training and development or work hours). The sample consisted of 1183 female employees ranging from non-manager to executive positions in the banking industry. The results of the survey indicated that even though the links and barriers to the career advancement of mothers and non-mothers are similar, important differences exist. Specific differences are seen regarding the fact that internal networks are negatively related to the career advancement of women with children, but unrelated to the career advancement of women without children. It also revealed that women who have children tend to work fewer hours than those without children which inevitably affect their growth opportunities to managerial level. These results support the belief that mothers experience additional barriers to career advancement when compared with women without children.

A study conducted by Mclellan and Uys (2009) was aimed at exploring how self-employed women cope by balancing their roles as mothers and executives. Their study involved five White mothers who are self-employed across varying industries. Their research indicated that even though all the women participating in the study are successful dual earners, they still had the primary responsibility of nurturing their families and assuring their well-being. The results obtained showed that participants' ability to balance both roles were due to: (i) quality time spent with children and family, (ii) structure and planning, (iii) coping with guilt, support structures and self-reliance and (iv) balancing between work and life. Siew Kim and



Seow Ling (2001 cited in Mclellan and Uys, 2009) posit that the number of children that a self-employed mother has significantly correlated to job/parent conflict because of the amount of time and effort required to spend with more children. According to Mclellan and Uys (2009), while this may be a valid argument, the findings of their research pointed out that participants who have three children felt that most of the quality time spent with their children was as a family unit (versus those participants that had two or one child), as individual time spent was not easy to organise. Respondents nevertheless did not negate the notion that individual time may have been better for their children. Most respondents agreed that when work had to take preference over family, they felt unsuccessful as mothers and that they were not in control.

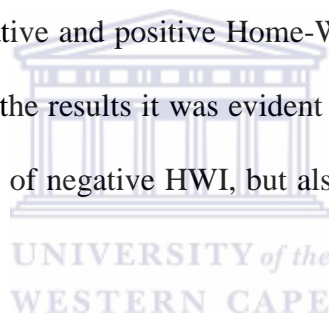


A study involving 20 employees in the petroleum industry was conducted to establish how employees of a company define and experience the phenomenon of work-life balance, to identify the workplace determinants of work-life imbalance and to obtain some solutions for the problem through the use of interviews. Findings revealed that most participants felt overloaded within their jobs and the fact that they had young families added to the existing pressures they experienced. The demands of work household and child rearing chores together with social events left them with little time for anything else (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) conducted a comparative study approximately five years ago which included sixty-nine men and women executives to explore the reason for “the opt-out revolution”. The findings obtained from the survey indicated that although working mothers are more likely to work full-time than twenty years ago, only thirty-seven percent (37%) of them worked full-time year round compared to fifty-four percent (54%) of women without children and sixty-six percent (66%) of men. Past patterns show a drop in the amount of

working mothers and statistics demonstrate that some married/cohabating mothers only work part of the year, part time, or stay home while their children are young as a result this may drastically affect their career advancement.

De Klerk and Mostert (2010) conducted research which included 2040 employees from four different industries within South Africa. A socio-demographic questionnaire and the Survey Work–Home Interaction-Nijmegen (SWING) was utilised to investigate the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and the work–home interaction in different occupational groups in South Africa. The study specifically looked at the impact of an individual’s parental status and the findings revealed that parental status was identified as a significant predictor of both negative and positive Home-Work Interference (HWI), but only in the experimental group. From the results it was evident that participants with children did not only experience higher levels of negative HWI, but also higher levels of positive Home-Work Interference.



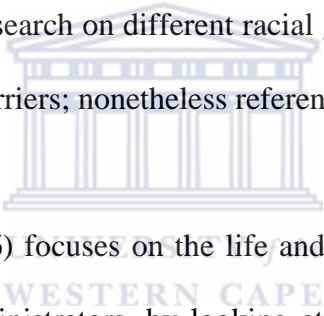
Mclean (2003) conducted a study with 59 working mothers to explore the levels of and interrelationships between stress, depression and work/home role conflict. A questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding the respondents’ experiences of stress, depression, work/home role conflict, support and coping. It was hypothesized that working mothers often experience stress due to the greater domestic burden they carry. The finding indicated that the ages and number of children respondents had did not have a significant relationship with stress experienced. Literature does however, indicate that as the role of an individual changes from singlehood to marriage to parenthood it becomes increasingly complex, demanding and stressful and having more than one and/or young children add to the complexity. The finding

of the study conducted by Mclean (2003) does not dispute the literature but merely suggests that for this sample in particular, it was not relevant.

### **5.2.2.3 HYPOTHESIS 3: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on race regarding career barriers in the workplace.**

The hypothesis is partially supported as the findings of this study indicate that there are significant differences regarding the perceptions amongst employees of different races for the following career barriers: Difficulties with network/socialisation, lack of confidence and racial discrimination based on employees race.

There seems to be a paucity of research on different racial groups relating to difficulties with network/socialisation as career barriers; nonetheless reference is made to available findings



A study conducted by Hite (1996) focuses on the life and career experiences of a group of black women managers and administrators, by looking at factors they identified as having impacted their career progress. The sample consisted of 17 black women. Several factors emerged when investigating which factors influenced the professional progress of these women. These included the influence of family on attitudes about self and life value, society and work, portraying the impact of institutional racism on work experiences; and the unique position, focusing on black women's limited representation in management and administrative posts. The findings indicated that black women do not blame race for every problem they encounter, this perspective seems to serve both as a means of preserving self esteem and of succeeding in a dominant white culture. Respondents stated that racial bias acts as a constant reminder that 'someone thinks less of you because of your colour' and maintaining confidence under such circumstances is often very difficult. Respondents also

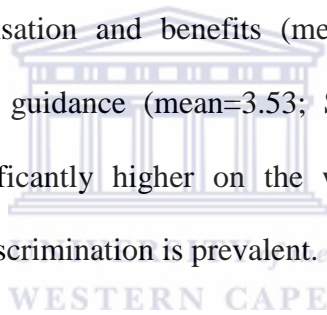
felt that by ascribing racism or discrimination to every less than positive encounter would be a barrier to success particularly in the white dominated business world, where drive to succeed and positive attitude are valued. Furthermore respondents indicated that self capabilities and self esteem was a means to achieving individual goals.

More recent research conducted by Alexis and Vydelingum (2007) investigated Black and minority ethnic nurses' experiences and impact on quality and service delivery in the United Kingdom. The study included a sample of 12 nurses, of which 7 females and 5 males. The results revealed five themes, namely; building ties, reflecting on experience, moving on, reduced confidence and lack of support. The findings indicated that respondents felt that making new friends did not only help them better adjust to the hospital at which they worked but it increased their understanding of the institution's culture to which they were not accustomed. It was also indicated that networking equipped them with the ability to devise strategies that enabled them to survive and progress within the institution they were employed by. Furthermore the results revealed that an individual's confidence is essential to develop clinical skills in a new practice environment.

A study on sixty-nine black chartered accountants (CAs) in South Africa was carried out to establish a profile of Black chartered accountants and to provide an overview of their work environment, including career barriers and expectations. The career barriers that were identified in this study were discrimination in terms of job assignments, racial bias, a lack of Black mentors and the resistance of the clients at auditing firms. These barriers were largely seen to impact Black CAs' career expectations and advancement. Furthermore, the findings reveal that more than 70% of the respondents indicated that they receive a limited nature of the work given to them and this therefore limits their experience. Similar to the current study,

approximately 60% of the respondents identify racial bias of supervisors as a barrier (Sadler, 2002).

Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) also conducted a study comprising of a sample of ninety respondents which constituted 57% Whites and 43% Blacks. Differences regarding sources of job stress, level of work engagement and career orientations based on race were focused on. Statistically significant differences existed between White and Black respondents with regard to job stress variables namely, career advancement prospects, workload, compensation and benefits and lack of leader/management support and guidance. Black participants scored significantly higher than White participants on the career advancement prospects (mean=3.38; SD=1.27), compensation and benefits (mean=3.76; SD=1.14) and lack of leader/management support and guidance (mean=3.53; SD=1.27) variables, whereas the White participants scored significantly higher on the workload (mean=3.37; SD=1.15) variable, thus, indicating racial discrimination is prevalent.

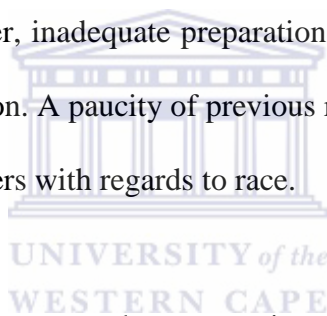


A study by Bolton (2003) focused on the impact that race has on policing. The study included 50 Black male and female police officers. The findings indicated that racial discrimination is prevalent within police agencies as most senior positions or positions of authority are held by White employees. The results further indicated that systematic barriers exist within policing agencies that limit the career advancement and longevity of Black employees' careers. The findings also show that race often affects how Black employees are trained, disciplined, transferred, promoted and assigned.

A study was conducted by Weeks, Weeks and Frost (2007) to examine the influence of race and social class on wage differentials between Black and White employees. The relevant

information was obtained by using a survey on 244 employees. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between race and social class when calculating the percentage of pay increase given to employees. Specifically, there was a significant negative correlation between perceptions of social class and percentage of increase when forecasting increases for Black employees, but there was no such correlation when the target was White.

The findings of the current study found no statistically significant difference regarding the perceptions amongst employees of different races for the remaining ten (10) career barriers: Conflict between children and career demands, decision-making difficulties, disability/health concerns, disapproval by significant others, discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers, dissatisfaction with career, inadequate preparation, job market constraints, multiple-role conflict and sex discrimination. A paucity of previous research could be found to support any of the above mentioned barriers with regards to race.



According to McKeown (2010) a report that was written by a global talent research firm, Novations Group, indicated that race and ethnicity affect perceptions of contribution and inherent value of direct reports or individual contributors by managers in the workplace. Managers participating in the research were asked to rank their direct reports in terms of contribution and performance based on the four Stages of Contribution Model: stage 1—contributing dependently, stage 2—contributing independently, stage 3—contributing through others, and stage 4—contributing strategically. Similarly, direct reports were asked to assess their own contributions. The results showed differing results between the manager's views and direct reports views. Managers' perceived the direct reports to contribute more in stage 1, whereas direct reports generally considered themselves to contribute more in stages 2 and 3. The biggest discrepancy that existed in manager and direct report self ratings were for

Asian employees. Managers also rated the contributions of African American professionals to be greater in stage 1, while African Americans see their contributions in stage 2. The study suggests that these differences are significant and can affect how managers actually position an African American employee or direct report for promotion. Furthermore, this could largely impact or limit their future level of influential contribution within the organization, which may result in disappointment and overall dissatisfaction within an individual's career. The present study acknowledges 'dissatisfaction with career' as a possible career barrier, however the findings of the current study does not concur.

**5.2.2.4 HYPOTHESIS 4: There are significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age regarding career barriers in the workplace.**

Based on the findings of the current research the results indicate that the hypothesis is rejected as there are no significant differences regarding any of the career barriers (conflict between children and career demands, decision-making difficulties, difficulties with networking/socialisation, disability/health concerns, disapproval by significant others, discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers, dissatisfaction with career, inadequate preparation, job market constraints, lack of confidence, multiple-role conflict, racial discrimination and sex discrimination) based on employees' age.

Research conducted at a large financial institution in the United Kingdom revealed that women experience discrimination at various stages of their careers. Women younger than 30 years old reported to experience sex discrimination in relation to unequal pay and benefits. Moreover, younger women within the organisation were assigned less challenging work, overlooked for promotions, and treated less favourably than their male counterparts. Female employees between the age group of 30 to 39 years old also reported to experience negative

treatment (women at the age of 36 were perceived as being “too old” to apply for promotions, whilst others felt that they were disadvantaged after periods of maternity leave and part-time work). Additionally, women over the age of 40 reported unequal access to training and promotional opportunities (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). Another study conducted confirmed the above finding; it also indicated that women were perceived to age earlier than men based on the assumption that women reached the peak in their careers at approximately age 35, ten years before their male counterparts (Itzin & Phillipson, 1994).

A study was conducted to address the myths and age-related barriers that currently discourage employers from training workers of different ages. In order to obtain the relevant information the researcher used qualitative interviews and theory from various experts. The findings of the study indicated that there is a relationship between employees’ age and training offered; employees who were older than 55 years were less likely than other employees to participate in training, or to have been offered it. Older employees were also less likely than younger or mid-life workers to make use of any opportunities for training that were made available. Furthermore, older workers were more likely only to have received on-the-job training. The research identifies two main reasons for the decline in training based on age: often employers do not offer older workers the same opportunities as their younger colleagues, and secondly, older workers themselves do not take up such opportunities due to low (that is the fear of looking foolish) or over-confidence in their abilities. It is apparent that older workers are less likely to identify their own training needs as a result of either confidence barrier (Newton, 2006).

Still and Timms (1998) conducted a study investigating the career and life decisions of 33 women in Perth and Western Australia. Their research looked at issues such as career



histories and future work goals' impact of ageing process on career achievement, retirement plans, and also examined the implications of barriers facing the older career woman. The relevant information was obtained through the use of interviews and focus groups. The research identified five related career barriers, namely: The male culture and gender discrimination at work, the nature of their working lives (past and present), ageism, the responsibility/burden of taking care of aged parents and negotiating one's personal and professional responsibilities (careers and relationships conflict). The study concluded that there is a need to develop further career development models to include the varying circumstances and experiences of older women employees.

A cross-sectional study was conducted by De Klerk and Mostert (2010) to investigate the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and the work-home interaction in different occupational groups in South Africa. The sample (N = 2040) included individuals from four South African industries (that is, the police service, earthmoving equipment industry, mining and nursing). One of the socio-biographical factors the study investigated was age. The findings indicated that respondents' age appeared to be a strong predictor of both positive Work-Home Interference (WHI) and positive Home-Work Interference (HWI) (with it being a significant predictor of negative WHI/HWI interaction only in the experimental group). The results pointed out however, that the effect of age was relatively small (with  $\beta$ -values ranging between 0.07 and 0.13). Furthermore, the results highlighted that younger respondents seem to experience statistically significantly higher levels of negative WHI/HWI, while the older respondents experienced statistically significantly higher levels of positive WHI/HWI. The researchers postulate that the findings may be due to the fact that younger participants are in the beginning stages in their careers and hence tend to invest a large amount of time and energy in their work in order to establish themselves firmly on

their career path, which may in turn, result in higher levels of negative interaction in both domains. Another reason for the findings may be because younger participants do not yet have the necessary skills for finding a balance between work and family.

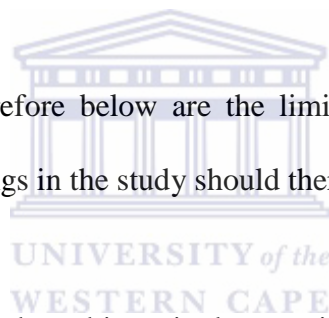
A study conducted by Simpson and Altma (2000) included a total of 221 managers (alumni's) from 11 business schools in the United Kingdom. The aim of their study was to look at the career development of male and female managers. The findings indicated that younger women are more likely to progress quicker than younger men or older females. Similarly, younger women are more likely to obtain senior management level and to be involved in functions associated with senior positions. According to the researches, the reason for this may be due to the fact that younger women are more willing to change organisations in order to progress. Generally, it was found that younger women are less likely to complain about career barriers than older women, they no longer only enter into traditionally 'female professions/industries, nor do they view their organisation as having negative attitudes to women. However, even though younger women are relatively successful they often appear to suffer from self-doubt and are more likely to identify lack of confidence as a career barrier. The study further indicates that barriers experienced were often attitudinal or social in origin.

A study by Chadud, Tealdi, Howes and Sprunt (n.d.) investigated how engineers selected employment with companies which ensured them a successful career even though their spouse had professional career as well, and how these couples dealt with relocation. Their study made use of surveys and targeted a random sample of approximately 25000 Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) members, excluding students. The findings showed that 20% of respondents have quit their jobs for personal or family issues. Respondents (65%) considered mobility to be important for career progression, and 31% saw it as moderately important.

Respondents also felt that the decision to decline a transfer has slowed down their career progression, and 40% feel they were limited in their career because of their dual-career status. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the most challenging aspect of being in a dual-career relationship was the need to sacrifice their personal ambitions for those of their partners. Forty percent of respondents also felt that they have been constrained in their careers because of their dual-career status and one-third of the respondents indicated that they considered leaving their company because of its handling of dual-career couples. The results show a dramatic difference in perception based on age (that is, young professionals opinions differed to those older than 55 years).

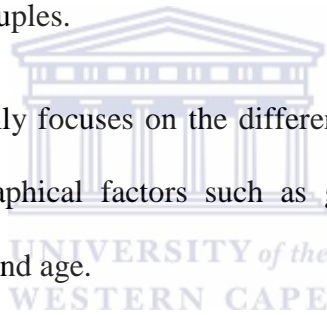
### **5.3 LIMITATIONS**

Every study has limitations therefore below are the limitations which are relevant to the current study. The research findings in the study should therefore be interpreted with caution.



- The present study was conducted in a single organisation and only a few departments within the organisation were included.
- Furthermore, as a non-probability sampling procedure was adopted, the results are not generalizable as only those employees who were easily accessible participated in the study. The findings may therefore not be an accurate reflection of the entire workforce and the results may therefore not be generalizable to the entire organisation.
- The population comprised of a total of 95 people, of which 77 individuals participated. The sample represented an unequal distribution of males and females with the majority of the respondents being Coloured which could also have introduced some elements of bias in the research findings.

- Furthermore, a quantitative study was used by making use of questionnaires, but no observation or interviews were used.
- The questionnaire was self-administered which could have prevented participants from being able to ask questions and clarify uncertainties. This may present further bias.
- The current research only focused on a few factors such as work/family issues, concerns over home and childcare, limited support from others, primacy of partners career, multiple-role conflict, discrimination, glass ceiling, organisational culture and job stressors - these are not the only important factors that influence the career or job progress of dual-career couples.
- The present study also only focuses on the differences in perceptions of dual-career couples, based on biographical factors such as gender, age, number of children (parental demands), race and age.



## **5.4 RECOMMEDATIONS**

### **5.4.1 Recommendations for future research**

In an effort to deal with the limitations of the current study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

- In future research it would be interesting to test whether the use of a larger sample, would yield the same or similar results. Due to the fact that a small sample was utilised in the current study one must be cautious in making generalisations of these findings.
- A proportionate stratified random sample should ideally be used. A larger stratified sample would allow the findings to be reliably generalised to the population. Sekaran

(2001) maintain that stratified random sampling could augment external validity and reduce sampling inaccuracies of future research.

- Future research on this topic is warranted given the paucity of literature and empirical studies available in the retail industry.
- Even though quantitative research was conducted and was suitable for this study, qualitative research would allow for better understanding of the perceptions and views of employees in retail who are in a dual-career relationship regarding career barriers. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative methodology could help understand dual-career couples and the differences in perceptions of career barriers. Data collection methods such as interviews and observations would help researchers obtain a better understanding of differences in perceptions of individuals in dual-career couples regarding career barriers.
- Furthermore, prospective studies need to include non-biographical variables, in order to determine the influence that these variables have on dual-career couples' perceptions of career barriers.
- It is also suggested that more than one organisation in various industries should be included, as it will add value to explore the concept of career barriers among dual-career couples.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for organisations**

The following recommendations are made for organisations:

- It is important for organisations to have continuous negotiations with employees in order to integrate the demands of the organisation and the career needs of its employees.

- Furthermore, organisations should value and respect family obligations. Organisations should do away with inflexible corporate policies as it contributes to a majority of turnover and result in an immeasurable loss of human capital for the organisation. It is therefore important for organisations to respond to the shifting demographics by adopting voluntary policies such as alternative work schedules and child and elder care assistance to help workers meet family needs, which in turn, will be beneficial to the organisation by attracting and retaining the best talent.
- Organisations can provide quality child-care facilities or can help couples cover child-care expenses if those facilities are not available at the workplace (Andam et al., 2005). One way to improve the productivity of employees with children is to relieve some of the child care burdens through employer-sponsored programmes. These programmes include providing counselling to help parents select child care and a list of licensed child care providers. Alternatively, employers can donate money to programmes designed to increase the amount of child care available in the community, paying existing child care centres close to work to hold openings for their employees, organisations can sponsor an entire centre by including space for a child care centre in new office buildings or employers can start their own day care centre by providing start-up costs, or space for the centre or both (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).
- Organisations could respect employees working schedules or allow for flexible working hours whenever possible. This can be done by a negotiation between employers and employees so that family-friendly meeting schedules can be implemented and to ensure that working hours are kept within a specified time frame (Andam et al., 2005).

- Work can also be redesigned in the following ways so that it can be made flexible: (i) videoconferencing can be used to eliminate unnecessary travel and (ii) rewards and promotions can be given to individuals who effectively use flexible schedules and are role models for others (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).
- Various authors (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al., 1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) assert that alternative career paths can be introduced as not every employee wants to climb the corporate ladder. This would then make room for different career paths (horizontal, stationary, slower paced) and accommodate the differing needs and priority of individuals.
- Various researches (Boles et al., 1997; Falkenberg & Monachello, 1989; Hall & Richter, 1990; Karambayya & Reilly, 1992; Layton, 1993; McCook et al., 1991; Neo et al., 1994; Roslin, 1990 all cited in Schreuder & Theron, 2001) maintain that organisations should be sensitive to the needs of women as they experience more constraints than men and are often required to make more trade-offs. As upward mobility is often impossible for women due to their commitments to home and family, organisations could develop female managerial skills through training and lateral moves. This would act as a preventative measure against female employees falling too far behind and it would prepare them for more senior positions when their family commitments are less.
- Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) posit that in addition to providing programmes, organisation could create an organisational culture that encourages and rewards the use of such programs.

- Furthermore, organisations could also provide couples with career management counselling, as this would involve both partners thinking about what their goals are and possible action plans (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2001).

## 5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The central purpose of the study was to investigate dual-career couples' perceptions of career barriers. Data was gathered regarding employees perceptions of career barriers as well as the biographical background of the respondents.

The empirical findings from the study indicate that employees at the retail organisation in the Western Cape where the research was conducted, perceive multiple-role conflict, decision-making difficulties, sex discrimination and racial discrimination as the career barriers that affect their career advancement the most and disapproval by significant others disability/health concerns and discouraged from choosing non-traditional careers as the career barriers that affect their career advancement the least.

In terms of the stated research hypotheses the following specific empirical findings emerged from the investigation: There are statistical significant differences in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on gender regarding lack of confidence as a career barrier in the workplace. However, no other statistical significant differences exist based on gender for any of the other career barriers. A statistically significant difference exists in the perception of dual-career couples who have and those who do not have children regarding disapproval by significant others as a career barrier in the workplace. However, there were no statistically significant differences for the other twelve career barriers. Significant differences regarding the perceptions amongst employees of different races were also found for the following



career barriers: Difficulties with network/socialisation, lack of confidence and racial discrimination. There is however, no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of dual-career couples based on age relating to any of the thirteen career barriers in the workplace.

The results of the study should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of the study. Cognisance must also be taken of the fact that the results obtained from the research may be specific to the retail organisation where the investigation was conducted. This may be due to the fact that a non-probability sample in the form of snowball sampling was used and due to the small sample size. For this reason, the results obtained cannot be generalised with confidence to other organisations however, it does provide insight with regard to differences in perceptions of employees in dual-career relationships regarding career barriers.



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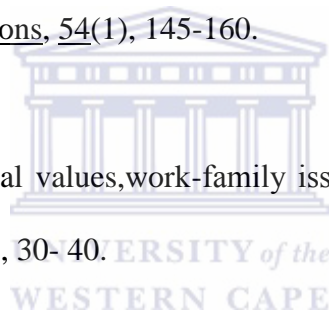
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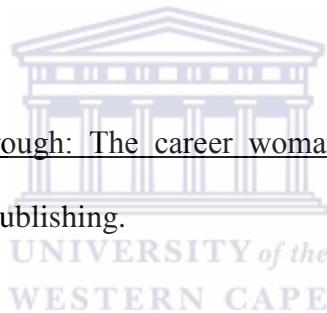
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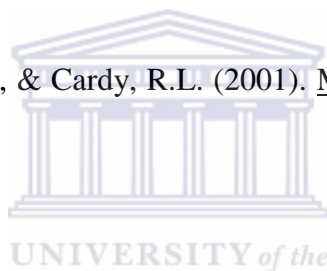
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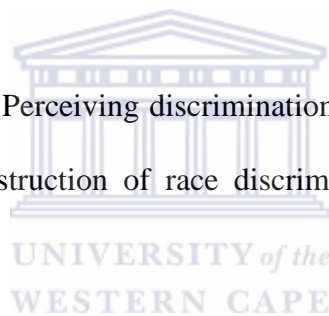
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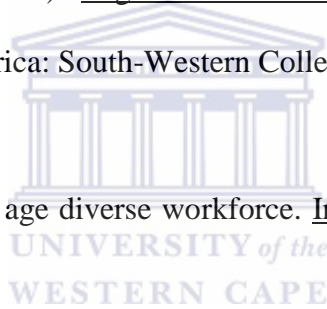
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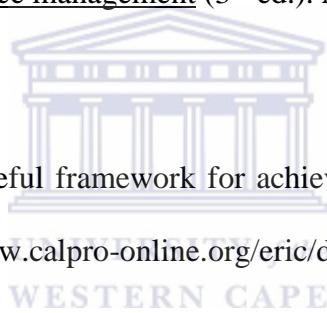
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## APPENDIX 1

20 August 2010

██████████  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████

South Africa

To whom it may concern,

I am currently in the process of completing a Master's degree at the University of the Western Cape in the Department of Industrial Psychology and I am required to conduct research as part of the degree. I am interested in understanding dual-career couples' perceptions regarding career barriers encountered in the workplace. I therefore seek your assistance in this regard. I require the relevant parties at the ██████████ to grant me permission to conduct research at the organisation. I would also need your assistance in informing employees that research is being conducted, who may participate and what the aims and objectives of the research are.

The research focuses primarily on dual-career couples, therefore **only** employees who are currently in a dual-career relationship may participate. If permission is granted for me to conduct the research within the ██████████, I would also need your help to identify those employees who are in a dual-career relationship, as I would need them to participate.

**Dual-career couple** - A dual-career couple refers to a mixed-sex couple who is married or living together and who are both currently employed outside the home (Ugwu, 2009).

Most people, including single, married and dual-career couples experience career barriers in the workplace – these barriers may be different for them and this study aims to assess the prevalence and impact of career barriers and what causes these different experiences. Furthermore, it will look at how they impact the career advancement of dual-career couples.

Please be assured that all information will be treated **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Participants will not be required to write their names or any other personnel information on the questionnaire. All data will be kept completely anonymous and will be directed to me. Please note that employees' participation is voluntary.

The procedure would be as follows: I will provide questionnaires to be distributed to participants to complete with a covering letter explaining the above. The questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete and will be returned in a sealed envelope provided. It is anticipated that the envelopes will be dropped in a box marked "**Completed questionnaires**" in a demarcated office at a specified date.

I would greatly appreciate your organisation and your help in furthering this research endeavour. Should any further information be required please do not hesitate to contact me via phone [REDACTED] or via email [REDACTED]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Patricia September

