

The Factors that influence Career Choice

Gretchen Adams – 2813971

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Supervisor: Prof. F. Abrahams

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Abstract

The primary aim of the study was to examine factors that influence career choices such as the individual, situational and environmental variables. The study was conducted in the motor retail industry whereby 223 respondents participated in the study by completing the questionnaire. Participants indicated that parents' or relatives' advice, association with others in the field, talent, skills and abilities, business opportunities and personal interests as significant influences on their career choices. The participants also identified perceived benefits such as employment security, potential for personal growth and development and opportunity to use skills and abilities as influential factors on career choice. The study also found that in the motor retail industry participants indicated that their gender has influenced their career choice; however educational levels were not seen as an influential factor on career choice. Furthermore, the study also examined participants' perception of organisational career support with regards to utilisation of career support activities and management's support for career development purposes. Even though participants indicated that the organisation has exposed them to career support activities, the participants' use of career support activities were limited to training and mentoring within the organisation or externally to assist them with career development. It is the hope of the researcher that the identified factors influencing career choice and the examination of the organisational career support systems would be helpful to human resources practitioners and career counsellors, in order to assist individuals with career decision making as well as career development within the organisation as well as externally.

Keywords: Career choices, Individual variables, Situational variables, Environmental variables, Career indecision, Career development, Career planning, Career management, organisational career support.

Acknowledgements

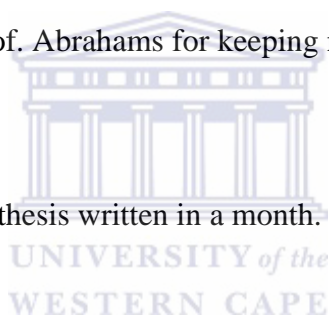
I would like to thank God Almighty for the blessings bestowed upon me and giving me courage to complete this degree. I would like to thank my parents, Berenice and Jerome for their support and love. Thank you to Joshua for supporting and encouraging me through this journey, it meant a lot to me. A big thank you to all my family members and friends that has been there for me, I could not have made it through without the support.

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Rome was not build in a day or a thesis written in a month. It has been an epic journey.

Thank you!



Dedicated to:

Louisa Das

(1924-2010)



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Chapter One

Career Choice

1.1. Introduction

Factors influencing career choice have been at the epicenter of numerous studies (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005; Lent, Hackett & Brown, 2000; Lent et al., 2002; Myburgh, 2005; Rousseau & Venter, 2009; Salami, 2007; Tang, Fouad & Smith, 1999) which have over a period of many years, theorised about what the driving force behind pursuing a career is. Previous studies have analysed career choice, particularly occupations such as accountancy, medicine and science. While some scholars have found similar factors identified by their peers, others have identified new factors which may also play a role in influencing career choices. Literature and research, including those mentioned above, have identified that individual, situational and environmental variables all play a pivotal role in influencing career choice (Greenhouse, Callanan & Godshalk, 2000; Myburgh, 2005; Rousseau & Venter, 2009; Salami, 2007).

It is accepted that career choice is an ongoing process and that it may change over time; this is due to individual experiences that are needed in order for talents, interests and values to be understood. During this process one hopes that misinformation is replaced by more accurate expectations as the individual learns about various jobs and occupations. However, this can be a trial-and-error process as potential occupations are pursued or even discarded as new information becomes available to the individual (Greenhouse et al., 2000). In general, choices are influenced by aspects such as age and gender, and the level of education as well as the expectations others may have of us (Rice, 2003). Factors that can influence an individual to pursue a career can therefore vary. Johnson and Mortimer (2002) states that a career can be a strong determinant of an individual's status within the community, his or her

wealth, earnings and lifestyle. In essence, the perceived value of a career is outlined by intrinsic factors (e.g., intellectual interests) and extrinsic factors (e.g., salary expectations, future training, etc.) (Dick & Rallis, 1991). This can serve as a strong motivation for individuals to pursue careers they perceive will allow them to attain the wealth, status or earning potential they desire. They will automatically develop a preference towards certain career fields or occupations which they anticipate will ensure that they achieve expected outcomes. However, entering careers which would match their interests and talents is more of a priority for some, while others look at careers which will give them growth opportunities such as promotions, further studying or training.

In a nutshell, the factors that influence individuals in making career choices at any point in their lives (high school pupil, graduate, midlife or retirement) will become evident in the career decision-making process. It is apparent that one individual's career needs may differ from those of another as it largely depends on the type of decision that is to be made. A student who has to decide about a major, or someone in a midcareer phase who is dissatisfied with his or her current role, may need to focus more on examining other career fields. On the other hand, a student on the verge of graduating would probably have to consider entry-level jobs at different organisations (Greenhouse et al., 2000). During the career decision-making phase, or when already in an established career, an individual may also find it necessary to engage in career development, career planning or career management, each with its own sub-processes (e.g., career exploration, goal setting, etc.) which can influence career choice. It is acknowledged that during or after this process some individuals have difficulty in deciding on an appropriate career, and this indecision could have a detrimental effect on the choices that they ultimately make (Kleiman et al., 2004; Osipow, 1999).

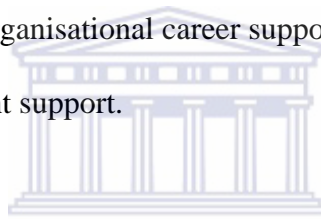
In practice, there exists an added motivation for organisations (schools, universities and companies) to understand careers holistically as it is directly linked to effectively managing career counselling and human resources. To attract, keep and maximise the talent and innovation of employees has become an essential organisational need (Kaye, 1985).

According to Greenhouse et al. (2000), careers are related to occupations, jobs and organisations. For that reason, through interactions in the work environment an individual's values are met, talents are used, and interests are stimulated (Greenhouse et al., 2000). For organisations to manage their human resources effectively it is important that they have an understanding of careers as this will give the organisation an advantage when examining how well they understand their employees' career needs, and then engaging them in effective career management activities (Greenhouse et al., 2000). What is more, in the modern workplace organisations are under pressure from multiple areas, including the economy, technology and society, to adjust to new and evolving demands in order to be effective, efficient and competitive (Ballout, 2007). Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1998) are of the opinion that because of labour market and organisational changes, career experiences are less predictable in the modern workplace. Consequently, it may lead to a sense of injustice and broken promises amongst employees. An established career may need to be reviewed or revised as the impact of developmental factors becomes evident (Arnold et al., 1998).

Organisations need to realise that individuals are unlikely to devote their entire careers to one particular organisation, and that they not only move from one organisation to another, they will also move out of their existing fields into entirely new ones during their careers (De Bruin, 2001). In order for organisations to retain talented employees, their roles in their employees' careers have changed dramatically. Career development activities should therefore focus on identifying and understanding individuals' concerns at the different stages

of their careers through establishing research strategies on career choice (Arnold, et al., 1998).

The main aim of this study is to identify factors that influence career choices such as the individual, situational and environmental variables identified in previous studies. In order to provide context to the study, this research paper will expand on factors presented in literature as to how, where and when these factors interplay in the broader career decision-making process. This is done to illustrate that once an individual has gone through the process and made a particular career choice, another phase comes into play when he or she enters and experiences the chosen career. The question is then, “what happens next?” In this study there will be an examination of organisational career support, including exposure to career support activities and management support.



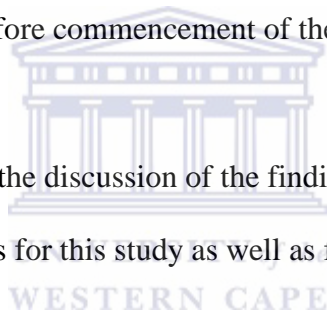
This study paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter one provided an introduction and a broad overview of the research in order to lay a context for the chapters to follow. In chapter two there will be a systematic investigation which will look at the definition and background of careers as well as a contextual look at the motor industry. An in-depth study of career choice models and theories as well as the individual, situational and environmental variables as identified by the conceptual module of career choices (Figure 2.2) (Roussou & Venter, 2009), will be undertaken. Chapter two will also look at the broader concept of career decision-making in order to provide context to the study; it will also briefly examine the career decision-making process as well as career indecision. In order to provide context to the next phase of the study, there will be an examination of the modern workplace, its effects on traditional careers, and how career success is defined. The aforementioned will lay the foundation for bridging the gap between an initial career choice and career choice in practice,

and will look at organisational career support, the role of the individual and organisational career development practices.

In chapter three, a review of the research methodology applied in this study will be discussed, including defining the population sample, rationale and objectives, hypotheses, considering the methods used in data collection, and the strengths and ethical considerations embodied in the study.

In chapter four, the data analysis results will be examined in order to investigate what the sample has indicated as factors influencing career choice. This section will also include the pilot study that was conducted before commencement of the final study.

Lastly, chapter five will focus on the discussion of the findings within the study, limitations of the study and recommendations for this study as well as future studies in this field.



Chapter Two

Literature Review

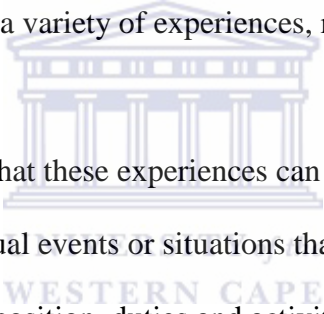
2.1. Introduction

Crafford et al. (2006) state that the first step towards career development is the choice of a career, and making preparations to enter that particular career. These choices are about matching personal characteristics to the work requirements of a career (Crafford et al., 2006). The discussion about careers can be broad, depending on the different aspects of a career one wishes to examine. In this chapter there will be an in-depth look at the definition of a career, with particular emphasis on the motor industry which serves as the population from which the sample was drawn. The study will look at the background of the motor industry in South Africa, and then move on to what the general careers or perceptions of the type of careers in the motor industry are. This will be done in order to lay the background for the chapters that follow. There will be an in-depth examination of Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd., the organisation from which the sample was drawn, as well as its history, structure, demographics, and also their organisational support activities.

The study will turn the attention back to the theoretical framework and look at the conceptual model of career choice (Figure 2.2) which serves as the basis from which the study will be examining the individual, situational and environmental variables affecting general career choices. A definite career choice can only be made once the factors influencing career choice have been studied. There will be a brief discussion around the career decision-making process and career indecision. The research will examine the modern workplace and career success, and will conclude by looking at organisational career support and, more specifically, the types of career support and the roles of the organisation and individuals in these processes.

2.2. Definition and background of careers

There are many definitions explaining that which constitutes a career. According to Greenberg and Baron (2008), a career can be defined as a revolving sequence of work experiences over time. Super (1980) defines a career as a combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of his or her lifetime. Super's definition of a career clearly shows the applicability of career choice, the stages of career development, and the roles as well as the possible influences on an individual's career through each stage of their lives. Arnold et al. (1998) refer to a career as a sequence of employment positions, roles, experiences, and activities encountered by an individual. From all the definitions given above one can safely conclude that a career is not an overnight, one-stop process but rather a long-term process which includes a variety of experiences, roles and activities.

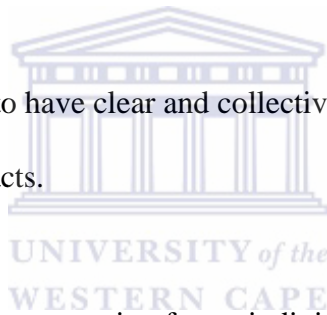


Greenhouse et al. (2000) suggest that these experiences can be both objective and subjective. Objective experiences refer to actual events or situations that the individual may be exposed to in his or her career such as job position, duties and activities. At the opposite end of the spectrum, subjective experiences refer to the individual's interpretation and understanding of work-related events and specific work experiences; these may include work aspirations, expectations, values and needs. An individual's work roles need not be of a professional nature; neither does it have to remain static within one occupation or even have upward mobility. Anyone engaging in work-related activities is in essence pursuing a career (Greenhouse et al., 2000). Greenhouse et al. (2000) further state that a career can be viewed as the property of an occupation or an organisation or it can be seen as the property of an individual. As the property of the organisation or occupation, it can be seen as a mobility path within one organisation. An example would be that of a retail sales organisation where an individual may start as a sales representative; however, the path in the organisation may

include positions such as moving into the realm of sales manager, district/brand sales manager, regional sales manager, divisional vice president of sales, and ultimately director of sales (Greenhouse et al., 2000).

Parsons (cited in Arnold et al., 1998) states that there are certain prerequisite elements required before an individual can make an informed career choice. These are the following:

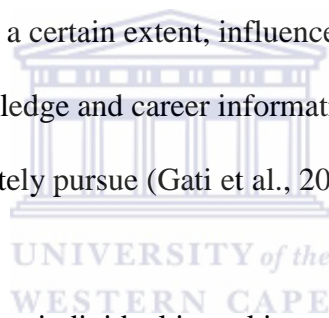
1. Individuals need a clear understanding of themselves and of their attitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, and the limitations of resources.
2. A clear knowledge of the requirements and conditions of the intended career, including success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
3. In summary, individuals need to have clear and collective reasoning about the relation among the above-mentioned facts.



Holistically, careers carry significant meaning for an individual, both financially and psychologically. It does not only determine how much an individual may gain or benefit financially, but it also gives individuals a sense of accomplishment, self-actualisation, pride and meaning to their lives (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). Weng and McElroy (2010) state that career decisions are not just about initial career choices, but can also refer to changes in jobs, occupation, voluntary turnover, specialisation, and developing skills.

The career decision-making process comprises many factors and stages to consider before deciding on a career choice. According to Chope and Johnson (2008), many individuals do not have the ability to distinguish between the jobs that they have and the ones they would wish to have, careers that they are currently developing or a vocational calling which is in

line with their personal vision of success. Fouad, Cotter and Kantamneni (2009) and Weng and McElroy (2010) concur that career exploration forms a vital part of the career decision-making process which affords individuals the opportunity to examine their own interests, self, and also gain ample information about career fields of interest to them. It appears that there is a direct link between individuals' career goals and their career choices as these have an intertwined relationship. It is important that individuals establish whether they have set realistic career goals and if the career paths they are pursuing or intend to pursue will allow them to attain these career goals and objectives. It is, however, expected that some individuals may experience some form of hesitation if proper information, self-knowledge and availability of resources are not readily at hand. Subsequently, career indecision may occur at some stage which can, to a certain extent, influence career choices. The individual may lack the necessary self-knowledge and career information to make an informed choice about which career path to ultimately pursue (Gati et al., 2010).



Career support activities to assist an individual in making an informed career choice can be made available through an external source or it can be part of an organisation's career support activities or development programmes. These activities may include, amongst others, career management, mentoring, training, career counselling, assessment centres and career-planning workshops. These career support activities can all assist individuals in identifying what their needs are, and whether the careers they are currently pursuing, or will be pursuing, will satisfy their intrinsic and extrinsic needs. Career choices and careers in general should not be seen as rigid, and through these activities individuals may be able to evaluate their current career choices. It is often viewed as a trial-and-error or an ongoing learning process as most people reevaluate their past experiences and failures to effectively choose the most appropriate career path in the future (Rousseau & Venter, 2009).

2.3. The Motor Industry in South Africa

Most studies that have been conducted on factors influencing career choices have largely focused on careers in science (Adams et al., 2006; Siann & Callaghan, 2001), accountancy (Auyeung & Sands, 1997; Myburgh, 2005; Paolillo & Estes, 1982;), medicine (Hauer et al., 2008; Wright, Wong & Newill, 1997) and generally students (Lent et al., 2002; Salami, 2007; Tang et al., 1999). Little research has been conducted in the motor industry and the factors that influence individuals into pursuing the various careers within the industry. Research and literature relating to the motor industry focus primarily on economics and legislation, particularly imports, exports, regulations, initiatives and demand. Although this is relevant to what the industry can offer individuals already employed in the motor industry or those who potentially wish to pursue a career within the industry, it does not focus on how to attract and retain these individuals. The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (MERSETA, 2011) are responsible for monitoring skills development and the creation of development initiatives alongside companies in these industries, including the retail motor industry. Although the industry largely consists of automotive, metals, motor, new tyre production, and plastics sectors, the study will focus on the motor industry which includes sales, repairs, and the after-sales market (MERSETA, 2011). In their 2010/11 to 2015/16 sector skills plan, MERSETA has indicated that the sector has serious challenges to overcome in attracting and retaining talent in the industry (MERSETA, 2011).

Although highlighting the skills shortage in South Africa in general, MERSETA (2011) acknowledges that there is a definite gap between industry needs and the availability of skills, particularly technical and trade skills, and the areas of project management, quality

management and supervision. A scarce-skills list drafted by the motor chamber indicates specific areas in the retail motor industry (MERSETA, 2011) which include the following:

- Motor and diesel mechanics.
- Panel beaters.
- Automotive electricians.
- Costing clerks.
- Training and development professionals.
- Finance and insurance clerks.
- Industrial relations officers.

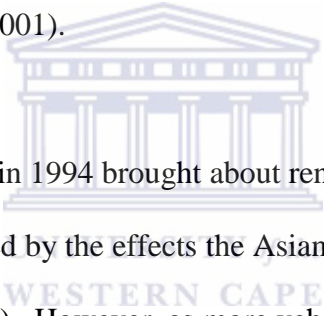
In its 2009 workplace-skills report, MERSETA (2011) disclosed that a third of the workforce is older than 55. This is alarming for two reasons. One: that most of these older employees would be going on, or planning for, retirement in the near future; and this will trigger replacement demands which will have to be met (MERSETA, 2011). Two: other challenges identified are the scarcity of appropriate and affordable skills, technical skills being lost due to emigration, the negative impact of HIV/AIDS, and the poor basic education performance in the country (MERSETA, 2011). Imperative to this research paper and to skills development in the industry, key strategic priorities in addressing these challenges have been identified to attract individuals and to retain existing employees in the industry through continuous development (MERSETA, 2011).

2.4. Background of the motor industry in South Africa

If one looks at the history and statistics covering the last few decades, it is evident that the motor industry in South Africa has grown exponentially. In the early 1920s Ford and General Motors were two of the first international companies to establish manufacturing plants in

South Africa as, at the time, more foreign companies recognised the rapidly growing market in this country (Black, 2001). This was especially a fruitful venture for many of these international companies as the establishment of plants proved to be highly profitable despite the high unit costs. Most of the vehicles were only produced for the local South African market as the assembly plants were kept in isolation from the global production networks and parent companies (Black, 2001). Most producers of light vehicles in South Africa are now wholly or partially owned by their parent companies in Japan, the United States or Europe.

The history of racial segregation and political unrest in South Africa also had a detrimental effect on the motor industry market, and there was a decline in the latter part of the 1980s due to international isolation (Black, 2001).



The new democratic state formed in 1994 brought about renewed economic reforms, but for the motor industry this was delayed by the effects the Asian economic crisis of 1997 to 1999 had on local markets (Black, 2001). However, as more vehicles were produced, the motor industry development programme was introduced in 1995 which outlined the import and export complementation which retained the incentive to produce locally (Black, 2001). This was done in order to systematically incorporate as well as draw investment back into the industry from global markets and manufacturers previously isolated because of the former political dispensation in the country.

Although it is an important part of the South African economy, the South African motor industry appears somewhat insignificant when compared on a global scale. In 2006 the industry contributed 7.6 % of GDP, or R1.727 billion, to the economy; however, it also contributes by facilitating job creation and supporting other industries and business (Beires,

n.d.). It is for those reasons that its operations are regarded as vulnerable, especially because of its exposure to the whims of global parent companies (Beires, n.d.). Locally, the motor industry has created a range of other jobs and businesses such as garage and fuel stations, specialist repairs, car dealers, vehicle component manufacturers, tyre dealers, engine reconditioners, vehicle body builders, parts dealers, and suppliers of farm vehicles and equipment (Beires, n.d.).

2.4.1. Careers in the retail motor industry

In South Africa there are motor vehicle assembly plants in Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Gauteng for manufacturers such as Toyota, General Motors, Daimler, BMW, Ford and Nissan (Barnes & Meadows, 2008). However, when a vehicle leaves the factory it becomes part of the motor retail industry which focuses broadly on sales of everything from cars, motorcycles and boats, to trucks and heavy-duty vehicles (Kennedy, 2005). The dealerships essentially become the “middle men” who bring consumers and the manufacturing industry together. These dealerships usually offer customers a holistic service: purchasing and selling pre-owned vehicles, marketing and selling new motor vehicles, and financing (Kennedy, 2005).

The industry is very complex, for a number of reasons. The design and components of vehicles are constantly changing in line with technology in order to keep up with consumer trends and demands (Kennedy, 2005). The motor retail industry, which includes vehicle sales and vehicle maintenance sectors, employs about 200 000 South Africans in different areas (Beires, n.d.). Some of the most notable careers in the motor industry are sales executives, auto electricians, technicians, body repair and spray painters. There is, however, a broader variety of careers in the motor industry and an individual’s career can also branch out into

administration or training. Kennedy (2005) further states that the career variety in the motor industry is so diverse that one can start out as a mechanic (also referred to as a technician) and move into sales or parts, and may even go the entrepreneurial route by starting a business or becoming a dealer principal of a large dealership.

The prospective career opportunities in the retail motor industry can be divided into new vehicles sales, used vehicle sales, and aftermarket sales (parts and service). Within these departments there may be a variety of occupations, including management, administrative support, sales, service and repairs (Kennedy, 2005). Besides sales there are many careers in servicing which include technical jobs such as technicians and employees who are responsible for tyre repairs. If one could single out technicians, their jobs have evolved due to the demands of technology such as complex electronic systems and computers. They are therefore required to have the necessary skills in electronics and automotive mechanics. Other technical experts include service managers, workshop managers and service advisors who would normally make up the management side of the service industry (Kennedy, 2005). The industry includes other diverse jobs such as drivers, specialists in insurance (finance), appraisers, service station managers and attendants.

2.5. Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd.

Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. was established in 1982 by Roy McAllister and today comprises 28 dealerships specialising in both passenger and commercial vehicle brands (Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013). In 2013, Mercedes-Benz South Africa acquired the majority shareholding and now owns 52%, with Roy McAllister as managing director owning 10%, and True Class Consortium, their broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) partner, owning 38% (Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013). The study will focus on

the 12 dealerships in the Western Cape. Each dealership consists of different departments: administrative, service sales (new and pre-owned), parts, and shared services (H.R, accountants, payroll, etc.)

In the Western Cape the company employs about 769 full-time employees and has the following demographics as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Sandown Motor Holdings Western Cape: Demographic information

RACE	AFRICAN		COLOURED		INDIAN		WHITE		TOTALS		Total Percentage	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Total	71	17	272	91	16	1	219	82	578	191	75.2%	24.8%
Percentage	9.2%	2.2%	35.4%	11.8%	2.1%	0.1%	28.5%	10.7%	769		100%	

(S. Keun, Personal Communication, March 09, 2014)

2.5.1 Organisational career support structures

Through the investigation it was found that some organisational career support structures and activities at Sandown Motor Holdings are provided to the employees collectively. This ranges from training courses to workshops, and a study policy has been put in place to encourage further learning. The organisation, however, ties this in with its own goals and objectives, one of which is to be consistently projected as an employer of choice in order to retain and attract the best and most talented individuals in the industry.

2.5.1.1. Performance management

The current performance management system at Sandown Motor Holdings functions in line with its policy aims, namely to build a culture of high performers, and that all employees contribute directly to the achievement of the dealerships' strategic objectives (Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013). Furthermore, employees who excel at meeting the organisation's business objectives are acknowledged and rewarded. Other objectives listed for the performance management system are the following:

- To improve business performance and promote employee relevance by linking the dealerships' strategic goals to the goals set for teams and employees.
- To facilitate behaviour congruent with the desired culture.
- To provide rewards and recognition for employees who meet and exceed challenging but realistic targets, ensuring that excellent performers are recognised.
- To build a high-performance organisation by providing feedback to employees that reflects their performance through structured contracting and reviewing processes.
- To link the Sandown Way (values) to employee behaviour and performance.
- To provide further training for employee development and training.

(Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013)

2.5.1.2. Training

The organisation strives to attract, develop and retain talent; training is therefore an essential part to achieve this. In Sandown Motor Holdings, training needs have to be identified by the direct line manager of each department, and this can be done through the performance management system (Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013). Employees are required to attend all the training courses they are enrolled for, and they are encouraged to develop themselves in order to utilise career development opportunities in the organisation (Sandown Motor

Holdings, 2013). The organisation also has a study loan policy which states that study loans will only be considered if the field of study applies to the individual's current position, if the studies will assist the employee in furthering his or her career, or assist in utilising other careers within the organisation (Sandown Motor Holdings, 2013). The training that the organisation provides largely focuses on technical- or skill-based training as well as organisational development training such as workshops on culture and ethics.

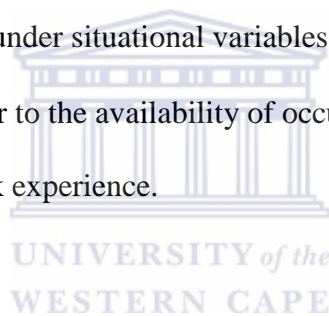
2.6. Career-choice model and influential variables

There are thousands of models and theories on career choice, some of which have become popularised, such as Donald Super's (1980) self-concept theory of career development. The theory asserts that a compromise exists between the individual's concept of reality such as social, economic, cultural background and self-concept. Another notable theoretical basis for career choice is provided by the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) formulated by Lent and Brown (1996) and based on the work of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which aims to explain career choices, interests and performance. The SCCT model recognises that personal attributes, external environmental factors, and overt behaviour all interact and influence one another. The authors state that when choice is constrained by factors such as economic restraint, family influences, discrimination and educational opportunities, it becomes less about the individual's personal interests (Lent & Brown, 1996).

For the purpose of this study the conceptual model of career choices by Rousseau and Venter (2009) (Figure 2.2) will be used. The model will be used in this study to serve as a theoretical guideline to examine the individual, situational and environmental factors that may influence an individual's career choice. The model was originally based on the career management model of Greenhouse et al. (2000) as well as a formulation of research literature

on the topic of career choice. For the purpose of this study this model serves as an appropriate basis as it suggests that there are factors that influence goal setting, goal processes, and career choices collectively, and are described as individual, situational, and environmental variables directly linked to the primary aim of this study. These variables all look at different aspects that might influence career choices (Rousseau & Venter, 2009) such as the following:

- Individual variables: Refer to talents and personal interests of the individual.
- Situational variables: Refer to the individual's more immediate environment and include, amongst other factors, family, friends, social, and cultural background. For the purpose of this study, and based on literature reviews of previous studies, gender will also be researched as an added factor under situational variables.
- Environmental variables: Refer to the availability of occupational opportunities, knowledge demands, and work experience.

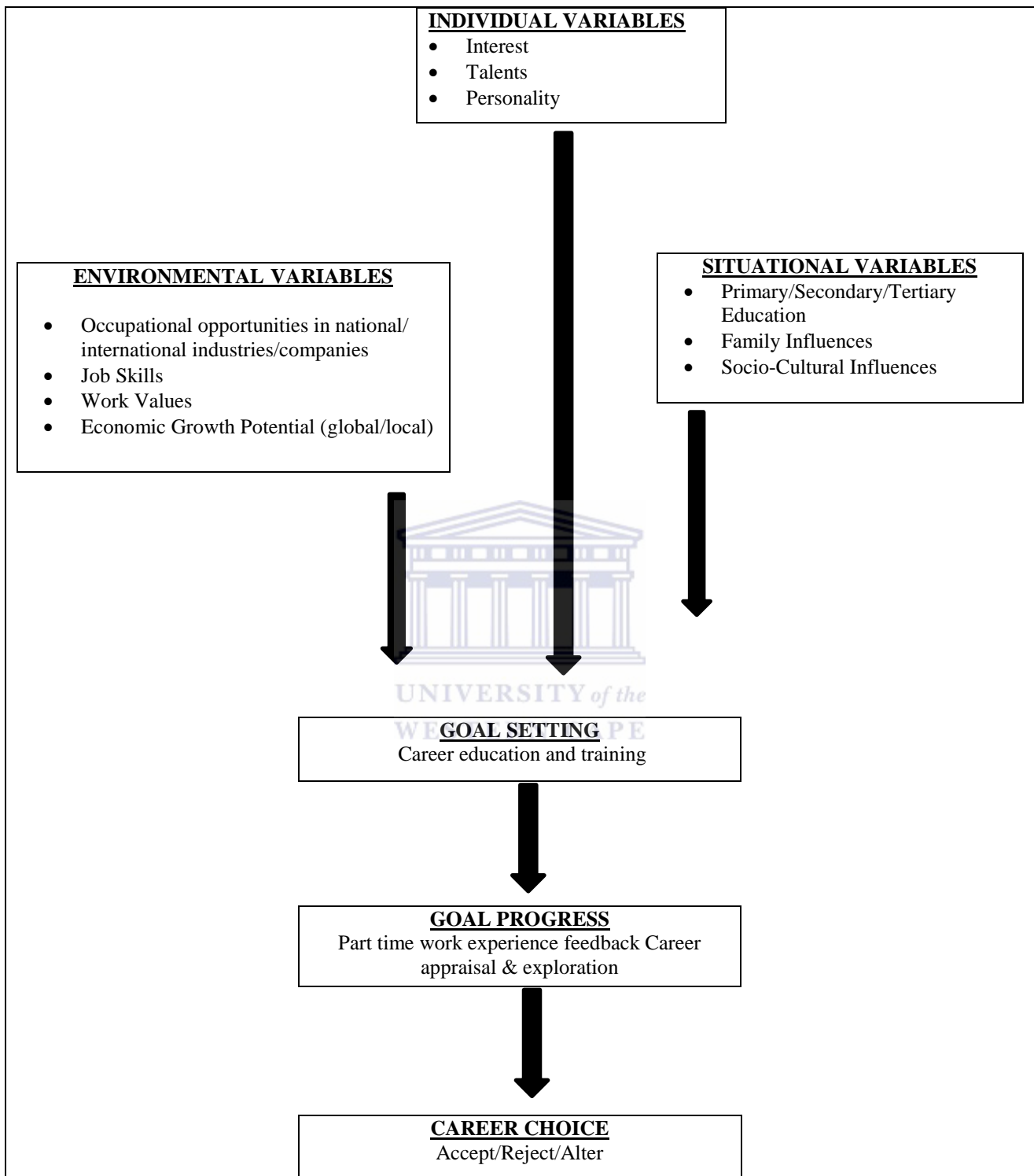


To further build on the model and the identified variables, Greenhause et al. (2000) regard career choices as a decision-making task which includes matching an individual's needs, values, motives and talents. It is also a developmental process that over time may impact on environmental and situational variables (Figure 2.2) and the tasks and processes involved. Most models on career choices have focused mostly on individual and environmental variables; however, it has been argued that the choice of occupation is mostly dictated by situational variables rather than personality or even job opportunities (Statt, 2004). This is especially evident in disadvantaged communities where individuals with unmarketable skills and qualifications usually depend on available employment or are dependent on short-term contracts (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Stead and Watson (1999) concur that the unskilled labour market hardly offers individuals a choice of work or occupation. Statt (2004) adds

that individuals with fewer or unmarketable skills and qualifications are dependent on whatever employment happens to be available and that career choices fall within the scope of the middle- and upper-class citizen; but even within these classes, parental role models may influence career choice. Job seekers may also be motivated to choose and pursue a particular career if they believe that it may lead them to job satisfaction and the attainment of personal as well as career goals (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Rousseau and Venter (2009) reiterate that an individual's expectation of a particular career choice and what he/she may experience in reality do not always correspond with one another. Thus experience over time may change the individual's attitude and perception of a particular career choice and also the extent or magnitude to which other factors may have influenced that particular career choice (Rousseau & Venter, 2009).



Figure 2.2: Conceptual module of career choice

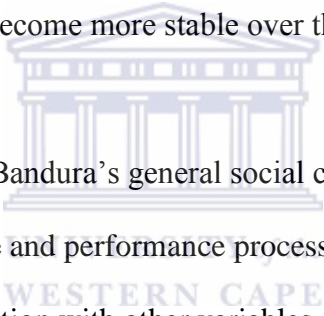


Rousseau, G., & Venter, D. (2009). Investigate the importance of factors related to career choice. *Management Dynamics*, 18(3), 2-13.

2.7. Individual variables

2.7.1. Interests and talents

As illustrated by the conceptual career choice model in Figure 2.2, individual variables such as interests, talents and personality can be related factors that might influence an individual. It is thought that in order to choose a career field, one first has to develop an interest in that career choice (Greenhaus et al., 2000). According to Super (1980), part of a career choice reflects occupational ability patterns (individual abilities and interests) which over time fall into patterns and clearly distinguish one career from another. Therefore, people prefer, enter, remain in, like, and succeed mostly in occupations which suit their interests and abilities (Super, 1980). Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey and Niles (2009) argue that interests are formed in middle school years, and they become more stable over the individual's life span.



Lent and Brown (1996) revisited Bandura's general social cognitive theory in order to understand career interests, choice and performance processes. One of the observations they made was that interests in conjunction with other variables also promote career-related choices but those interests develop over a period of time. The authors state that individuals' environments expose them directly to a variety of activities such as sports, music, mechanical tasks, etc. Individuals, especially adolescents and young adults, are encouraged and supported by those who surround them to pursue these activities (Lent & Brown, 1996). In turn, these individuals are encouraged by others to participate in activities through which they will attain satisfactory achievement. Through continuous practice, feedback and skills refinement they can then establish personal performance standards. Individuals' self-reported levels of competence and value they attach to the outcomes of these activities as career interests are linked to individual occupational patterns such as their likes and dislikes, or indifference towards certain occupational and career-related tasks (Lent & Brown, 1996).

A South African study by Alexander et al. (2010) found that interests have been identified as a major influence on career choice for students majoring in computer-related subjects, and that these interests play an important role in goal-setting.

Talents refer to one's skills, aptitudes and capacities. It is often said that success hangs in the balance as an individual's talents and hard work reflect what he/she can achieve with adequate training (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Greenhaus et al. (2000) describe talents as natural aptitudes directed in a special direction, and argue that it is often the case that individuals may miss the opportunity in a job situation to take full advantage of their talents, and this may occur due to an incorrect career choice. Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) state that career competence also plays an active role in whether or not an individual pursues or continues a particular career. They argue that careers have become more open and diverse with fewer rigid structures, and are no longer solely controlled by employers. Therefore, it is noted that contemporary careers require individual qualities, abilities and skills that differ from yesteryear's criteria as the modern workplace allows people to navigate their own careers, allowing them to opt for various career choices and paths and that they are no longer restricted to one employer (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Career competence comes into effect and refers to the individual's ability and skills to do the following (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006):

- *Know why*: Refers to values, attitudes, internal needs, identity and lifestyle of the individual.
- *Know how*: Refers to expertise capabilities, tacit and explicit knowledge of the individual.
- *Know whom*: Refers to the individual's networking relationships and how to seek out the right people.

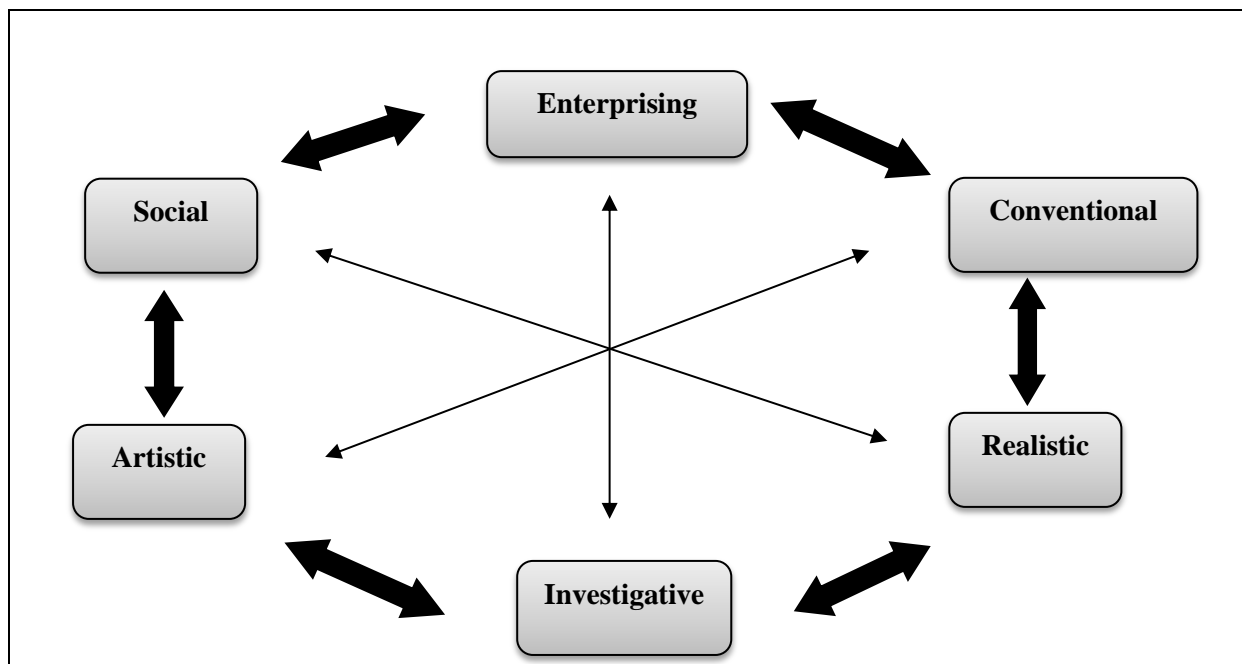
- *Know what*: Refers to the individual's ability to identify opportunities, threats and specific job requirements.
- *Know where*: Refers to individuals being able to identify where they should enter a workplace (e.g. industry), training and advancement.
- *Know when*: Refers to the individual's ability to time career choices and activities.

2.7.2. Personality

Personality is recognised by researchers as one of the most important variables that can be associated with career choice (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Ozer and Benet-Martinez (2006) argue that personality can be strongly related to, and associated with, outcomes such as interests, career choice, job satisfaction and job performance based on one's talents.

Personality traits can furthermore be associated with, or even affect, vocational self-efficiency. Roberts, Caspi and Moffitt (2003) state that personality assessed in adolescence can affect workplace experiences and outcomes in early adulthood. The study also found that emotional stability is strongly related to financial security and self-confidence, and that agreeableness is related to occupational attainment and work experiences. Self-esteem plays a pivotal role in developing self-concept and an individual may tend to choose a career path that will complement his or her personality and self-concept in order to enhance feelings of self-worth (Chartrand, Robbins, Morrill & Boggs, 1990). Personality and talent should, however, not be viewed as fixed variables in career choice as both these individual constructs are unique and developed over time as an individual matures (Rousseau & Venter, 2009).

Figure 2.3. Holland's Hexagon



Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2008). *Behavior in Organization* (9th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson International.

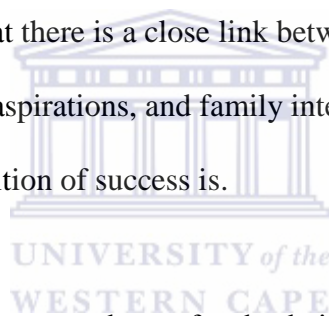
Holland's theory (Figure 2.3) about personality and vocational choices postulates that people are most satisfied when occupational choices match their personalities (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). The theory is based on six different personality types, and each is associated with a specific work environment in which the individual is most likely to thrive. These six vocational orientations represent a distinct lifestyle that an individual envisions, and include preferred methods of dealing with daily problems, values, interests and preference for engaging in some roles and avoiding others (Holland, 1959). The theory furthermore states that the person-job fit is important for success and satisfaction, and it examines the worst career or work environment matches for the different personality types (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). According to Holland's theory there is a correlation between personality and the most appropriate work environment which will result in individuals experiencing successful career development, and to happier and stress-free lives (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

2.8. Situational variables

2.8.1. Family influences

Situational variables (Figure 2.2) involve family influences which impact the extent to which an individual's family or parents are involved in the career planning, career choices, and the decision-making process. A study by Paolillo and Estes (1982) of accountants, attorneys, physicians and mechanical engineers found that physicians highlighted parental influence and peer influence as the most influential factors in deciding on a career. Parents' involvement can be exhibited through their provision of advice and information on the types of jobs or careers their children could pursue. Of importance is parents' encouragement, their reaction to and approval of the career choice or potential choice, and the financial support they are able to offer. Bakshi, Gandhi, Shah and Maru (2012) argue that family influence on career choices starts at a very early stage in an individual's life as family members may be modelling specific competencies, challenges and risks associated with a particular career or job. Bakshi et al. (2012) also reiterate that children's perceptions of work roles are influenced by what they learn or are exposed to in their family settings. Parents directly influence career choices early on through socialisation and decisions on where to live, what to provide materialistically, which school the child will attend, and what extra-curriculum activities the child may participate in. All this will in later life have an impact on the child's career choices (Bakshi et al., 2012; Bandura, 1982). Subsequently, Bandura (1982) states that socialisation and educational background play a significant role in the development of self-efficacy as an individual's future career development activities and occupational choices will be influenced by their parents' career-related efficacy, and also as parents establish which careers they perceive to be suitable for their children. It is therefore important to note that self-efficacy can also have an impact on the development of interests and goals-setting, and can furthermore direct the intensity and effort put into tasks (Bandura, 1977).

In Asian American communities most career choices are not individual choices but are rather based on collective family decisions (Salami, 2007). This collective approach is based on the belief that the younger generation has a duty to accomplish or pursue the wishes of the older generation. This is further supported by the study of Tang et al. (1999) who found that in Asian American societies the family's involvement strongly impacts the career choices as these parents would like their children to pursue careers that are financially secure, rewarding, and which are more practical and marketable. Crafford et al. (2006) state that some families may have strong ideas and beliefs about what an acceptable and an unacceptable career choice may be. For example, some careers such as nursing and teaching are perceived as primarily suited to women whilst engineering and construction are mainly for men. Salami (2007) found that there is a close link between the career decision-making processes, career choices, career aspirations, and family interaction which is more extensively related to what the family's definition of success is.



The family's social and economic status plays a focal role in the extent to which they influence and contribute to an individual's career decision and planning process, linking the parents' educational and socio-economic status to the individual's career development process. Parents may also direct their children towards a certain career path based on their own personal career choices in order to either follow career tradition in the family or to follow or manage the family businesses (Crafford et al., 2006). Middleton and Loughead (1993) state that in the adolescent phase, which is a critical stage in career development and in making a career choice, parental involvement plays an active and vital role. This parental role could be categorised under either positive involvement, non- involvement or negative involvement. Lucas (1997) concurs that when parents encourage functional independence and foster emotional independence, their children are more likely to exhibit higher degrees of

career commitment and increased efficacy in career-related tasks. Notably, emotional independence, as mentioned above, is related to the degree of freedom from excessive need for approval, closeness and emotional support from parents (Lucas, 1997).

Hashim and Embong (2015) agrees that parents and family involvement play a decisive influential role on career choice however the authors reiterate that peer influence on an individual's career choice should not be underestimated, especially during the adolescent phase when most individuals are very impressionable. Breakwell and Beardsell (cited in Hashim & Embong, 2015) concur that during the adolescent phase, individuals are more likely to be influenced by the norms of their peers as they seek to establish personal identity in line with the expectations of their peers. Friends and peers can also be influential in the decision making process as the individual will perceive that those that are closest to them approve of their decision (Hashim & Embong, 2015). It is argued that peer influence can be either positive or detrimental contributors to an individual's career choice as Brekke (1997) found that peer pressure resulted in lack of participation in college- level physics.

An individual's willingness to relocate may also be a deciding factor when choosing a particular career path, especially in cases of global assignments (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). According to Rousseau and Venter (2009), apart from having to adapt to new environments individuals' readiness to do so may also be influenced by spouses and relatives. Van der Bank and Rothmann (2006) note that family support is vital when individuals have to deal with cross-cultural adjustments as it is a psychological adjustment that they have to make, especially when the career may lead to working abroad. It has also been found that an individual, spouse or children's inability to adapt to a cross-cultural environment may lead to failure in both national and international assignments (Van der Bank & Rothmann, 2006).

This is especially significant if one considers that in the modern work environment, as opposed to the traditional one, that 60% of all employees in the labour market will work in multiple locations as the modern workplace tries to adapt to the tasks, availability of resources and client requirements (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). More so, the distribution of work activities have changed and work tasks are now distributed more broadly on average: central office (30%), remote locations (40%), and community-based locations (30%). This is in stark contrast to the traditional central-office-bound approach of yesteryear (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). The emotional support that the family can provide can now more than ever assist the individual in overcoming negative feelings and experiences, and help build confidence in their ability to adjust to the cross-cultural transition (Van der Bank & Rothmann, 2006).



2.8.2. Role models

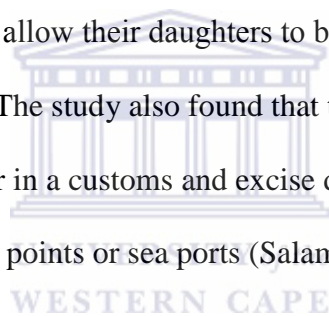
A study conducted by Quimby and DeSantis (2006) has shown that there is a strong relationship between role models' influence and a variety of career-related outcomes, including career maturity, career aspirations, career indecision and attitudes towards non-traditional careers. The authors argue that role models may provide different learning experiences which may increase the likelihood of an individual choosing a particular career. As proven in the study of Quimby and DeSantis (2006), role models can be important to women who choose non-traditional careers as there may be a lack of female role models in non-traditional careers such as engineering, construction, the military, etc. According to Quimby and DeSantis (2006), individuals' exposure to role models through written or visual material can increase their likelihood of pursuing particular careers, especially non-traditional careers. However, Stead and Watson (1999) state that in South Africa most students avoid mathematics courses and many do not complete degrees or diplomas in science or

engineering due to the lack of role models, especially black role models in these career fields. They also state that political figures and other individuals who have returned from exile with qualifications obtained elsewhere in the world are too far removed from the disadvantaged South African adolescent to be relevant as role models (Stead & Watson, 1999).

A role model can influence an individual's career choice directly or indirectly through his or her influence on the individual's self-efficacy. The role model provides various learning experiences which increase self-efficacy, and in the process also increase individuals' interests and choices in various educational and occupational fields and spheres (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006). Individuals who have observed a successful role model operating in a specific field have expressed a preference for pursuing that particular career, and carry the belief that they would be successful in the chosen occupation (Quimby & DeSantis, 2006). The study of Wright et al. (1997), while examining the career choices of medical students, found that role models constituted a crucial influential factor in choosing one clinical field over another for their residencies. Gianakos (1999) also found that individuals with stable career patterns are more likely to have career role models who are professionally employed in their desired fields. These role models can provide a realistic preview of the demands and rewards of the prospective career and the individual may also be more likely to adopt the practical skills, knowledge and work-related attitudes demonstrated by these role models. Perkins, Bennett and Dorman's (1993) study on non-traditional male career choices such as nursing has found that when there is an absence of a role model, exposure to female nurses is equally as influential. The participants in the study also noted that having an association with someone in the field such as relatives or knowing someone within the field influenced their career choice.

2.8.3. Socio-cultural factors

Socio-cultural factors are part of an individual's more immediate environment which can include cultural and religious beliefs and attitudes. Ethnic and cultural influences can be central to the individual's career decision making, and may play a role in choosing a particular career (Amundson et al., 2009; Salami, 2007). Some cultures have different expectations from both men and women; some expect the youth to pursue the same careers as their parents; and some may expect an individual to remain with one employer in the same occupation while others encourage career movement (Amundson et al., 2009). The study of Salami (2007) of university students in Nigeria found that some careers such as law are frowned upon as, in their view, it perpetuate injustices, corruption and immoral dealings. More religious parents would not allow their daughters to be "call girls" as this is in conflict with their religious perspectives. The study also found that the students were not allowed to enter careers in the police force or in a customs and excise department because of the temptation to take bribes at check points or sea ports (Salami, 2007).

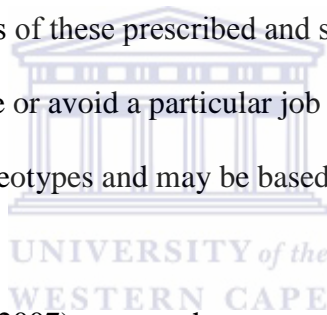


Besides the perception that exists about certain careers there is also the socio and political environment that might influence an individual's career choice. Discrimination in the labour market exists; opportunities are not the same for men and women, whites and minorities (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002). Griffith (1980) agrees that different career opportunity structures are available to different people; these structures in turn influence how different minority, racial and ethnic groups are socialised in the world of work. This may also influence the development of their work-related expectations, aspirations, and behaviours relating to career choices. Experiences of discrimination can have a lasting effect on career choices. Anticipated discrimination can also restrict career choices, as an individual will avoid careers in fear of potential discrimination against them based on race, ethnicity, gender,

sexual orientation, age, etc. (Brown & Lent, 2012). Therefore, politics has in the past, and still does in many parts of the world today, influence which careers are open to which groups based on race, gender and religion (Crafford et al., 2006). History has shown that careers have been redefined in the past by political events and policies which determined that jobs that were traditionally for black people became white-dominated jobs, or “whites only” jobs, as they were known then, due to the politically indoctrinated segregation policies in America, and similarly in South Africa during apartheid (Griffith, 1980).

Stead and Watson (1999) state that the apartheid era created barriers which prevented people from pursuing careers of their choice, and created a system of following professions that were politically established based on racial and ethnic identity. They further state that these barriers did not allow black South Africans (Africans, Coloreds, and Indians) to translate their career interests into career-related goals and activities. Consequently, the environment and other social variables at the time may have directly or indirectly influenced career choice (Stead & Watson, 1999). In these situations it became evident that blacks were forced from occupations in which they had become established, and were relegated to jobs that whites had no interest in and which were usually less competitive, less well-paid and less prestigious (Griffith, 1980). The meta-analysis study of Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) reviewed several studies related to the cultural context of career choices established that race and ethnicity did not exercise significant influence on career choices and decision making; however, they did establish that there were differences amongst the racial and ethnic groups relating to their perceptions of career opportunities and the barriers facing them. This is also in line with socio, economic and political contexts in which many racial and ethnic minority groups live and work.

Crafford et al. (2006) and Amundson et al. (2009) also link society as an influential factor as it to a large extent influences career choices through social pressure, cultural and political beliefs, and standards of accepted and unaccepted norms. It also determines which careers have high or low status, which are well paid, and the degree of power and authority such a career will wield. Holland (1959) concurs that social influence is critical in affecting occupational choice, especially in the early adolescent stage when hierarchical social pressures have a direct effect, compared to late adolescent or early adulthood when social pressures are less influential. Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson (2006) take the discussion about societal influence on career choices further, and highlight that there are occupational stereotypes and beliefs which claim that in order to enter certain careers a certain image is required. Individuals' perceptions of these prescribed and stereotypical requirements can influence their decisions to pursue or avoid a particular job or career. These beliefs may also be extended to organisational stereotypes and may be based on cultural and societal norms.



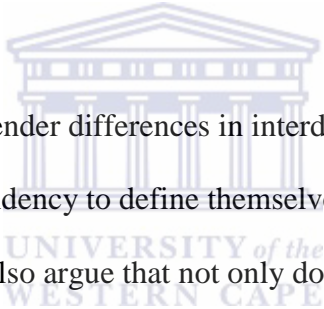
Humlum, Kleinjans and Nielsen (2007) support the argument that career choice is influenced by social status, and argue that for this reason people may opt for careers such as teaching and public administration, notwithstanding its low earning potential. This is confirmed by the study of Paolillo and Estes (1982) which found that for attorneys the attainment of social status was the most important factor influencing their career choices. The study by Tang et al. (1999) examined the factors that influence career choices amongst Asian American students, and they found that stereotypes were important in shaping career-related identities and interests. It is perceived that Asian Americans are more likely to choose careers in engineering, computer science or mathematics rather than careers in a sales-related field. Leong and Hayes (1990) believe that the above-mentioned stereotyping leads to a perception that Asian Americans are more competent in physical, biological, and medical sciences and

would be less successful in verbal, persuasive and social careers. Similarly, Meadus (2000) for example state that stereotypes about careers often lead to discrimination for men in choosing non-traditional careers such as nursing which is considered to be a traditionally female occupation. These stereotypes, however, could become an internal barrier if these stereotypes were internalised.

2.8.4. Gender

Behrend, Foster Thompson, Meade, Grayson and Newton (2007) and Brown and Lent (2008) state that gender influences career choice and career decision making. Brown and Lent (2008) contends that this influence happens throughout an individual's life span and influences individuals' perception of what careers might be appropriate, their self-efficacy for traditional and non- traditional careers, and their interests in these careers. Behrend et al. (2007) argue that men and women hold different career values; however, the desire for a personal fit is mutual for both genders. The perception of the fit may be purely dependent on certain social factors such as whether a career is a traditionally male or female occupation as well as characteristics associated with the career which may also be weighed before a career choice is made (Behrend et al., 2007). For instance, managerial positions will be regarded as a male-dominated occupation while nursing is an example of a female-dominated occupation (Salami, 2007). As proof to substantiate the latter statements, one just has to look at South Africa where women constitute 52% of the adult population, yet men are 1.5 times more likely to be involved in the early stages of entrepreneurship (Herrington, Kew & Kew, 2010). A 2009 survey conducted by the global entrepreneurship monitor program indicated that South African women are less likely to be involved in the early stages of entrepreneurship or starting businesses compared to their male counterparts due to their belief that men have the

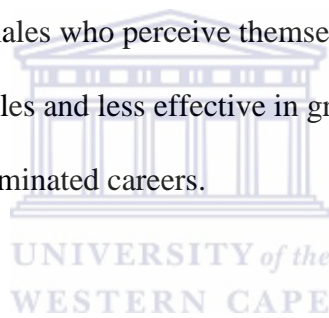
knowledge and skills to start a business, are aware of good business opportunities, and because they know someone who is a proven entrepreneur (Herrington et al., 2010). These results emphasise that women in fact do face a more difficult task in becoming entrepreneurs, and that this may be due to their higher levels of domestic responsibilities and lower levels of education; more so in developing countries where there is a lack of female role models, fewer business networks in communities, a lack of capital and assets, lower status in society, and a culturally induced lack of assertiveness and confidence in their abilities to succeed in business (Herrington et al., 2010). Salami (2007) states that gender-dominated occupational fields provide fewer business opportunities for many individuals, despite their qualifications, level of skills or motivation.



Behrend et al. (2007) examined gender differences in interdependence and connectedness. They argue that women have a tendency to define themselves based on social relationships and connectedness. The authors also argue that not only do men and women value social relationships differently, but may also define social relationships differently and this in turn relates to their occupational and career interactions. A study by Roter, Hall and Aoki (2002) supports the above statement as it found that female doctors are more likely to engage in interpersonal behaviours, asking psychosocial questions and have emotionally focused discussions with patients. The study also found that female doctor's appointments lasted two minutes longer than appointments with male doctors thus illustrating the difference in the type of career-orientated and interpersonal relations between men and women.

In a study of Hite and McDonald (2003) on the career aspirations of non-managerial women, they found that when making initial career choices the older women in the study only had traditional female career choices available to them such as teaching, nursing, secretarial or

homemaking, and that most of them chose one of the latter two options. These women also highlight that the decision to opt for a particular career choice was based on a greater interest in marriage and family, finding work which paid a good salary and benefits, and which ultimately offered job security (Hite & McDonald, 2003). Bandura (1982) stated that society expects women to have a strong self-efficacy not only to enter male-dominated careers but also to manage and balance workload and household demands. The study of Murrell, Frieze and Frost (1991) shows that female students who indicated a desire to work in a male-dominated career field had higher career and educational aspirations than women planning to enter female-dominated career fields. Conversely, Hackett and Betz (1981) found that males perceive themselves as being equally effective in both male- and female-dominated occupations in comparison to females who perceive themselves more effective in traditionally female-dominated roles and less effective in grasping both the educational and job functions required in male-dominated careers.



2.8.5. Educational background

According to Crafford et al. (2006), individuals' educational experiences will influence their choice of career. The quality of primary and secondary education, and individuals' attitudes towards education, overall learning experiences, the availability of learning opportunities, and also the sources of career advice they may have been exposed to, are determining factors when choosing a career (Crafford et al., 2006; Stead & Watson, 1999). The nature and quality of individuals' education can also determine whether they have the entrance requirements at tertiary level for their specific career choices (Crafford et al., 2006). Poallilo and Estes' (1982) study found that decision timeframes for practicing accountants, attorneys, physicians and mechanical engineers differed significantly. They concluded that most mechanical engineers and physicians already decided upon their career paths during

secondary school, while accountants decided on their career paths only in the first two years of tertiary education, and attorneys decided in their last years at college or after completing an undergraduate program.

Bright, Pryor, Wilkenfeld and Earl (2005) conducted a study of university students' career decision making and concluded that teachers' and lecturers' influence were listed as the second most influential factor on students' career choices. The authors conclude that the persuasive nature and importance attributed to the role of the teachers and lectures had an obvious effect in shaping the individual's career choices. This was also evident in the study of Dick and Rallis (1991) that found that teachers had the strongest influence in girls' career choices. A study conducted on students' choice to pursue physics and science as a subject and career choice found that teachers and lecturers were instrumental factors (Springate, Harland, Lord & Wilkin, 2008). Some students in the study also highlighted that they have decided not to continue with physics or science subjects due to what they perceive as being poor and unhelpful teachers (Springate et al., 2008).

Humlum et al. (2007) stated that an individual initially chooses a certain field of education because they expect a higher future income in the long term, and this feeds into their self-identity and self-image. The study also found that for women, more so than for men, identity-related factors were pivotal when choosing between long-term and medium-term education, for example degrees, diplomas and certificates (Humlum et al., 2007). Themba, Oosthuizen and Coetzee (2012) conducted a study of career maturity in the South African military, and found that educational levels played a significant role in the maturity levels of participants. It indicated that females with degrees or diplomas had significantly higher levels of mastering career-development tasks in comparison with their male colleagues and

those with only a matric qualification (Themba et al., 2012). In comparison to those with only a matric qualification these women also seemed to make better career-related decisions and integrated this with personal information; they also have more informed self-information (e.g., life roles, work values and occupational interests) which ultimately influence their career decision-making (Themba et al., 2012).

2.9. Environmental variables

2.9.1. Economic growth opportunities, business opportunities and job skills

Environmental variables refer to economic growth opportunities, business opportunities and job skills which may not only influence initial career choices but also direct the future job exploration of an individual (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Other factors such as the changing economic circumstances in a specific industry or organisation, the availability of occupational opportunities, and personal growth opportunities and the facilitation of improvement in an individual's job-skills may also be influential factors considered when making a career choice (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Amundson et al. (2009) and Johnson and Mortimer (2002) are of the opinion that career choices are influenced by local labour market conditions as well. Labour conditions such as the type of industry found in a community may vary, and can dictate the type of employment and wages; these are also influenced by local unemployment rates, wage ranges and racial make-up (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002).

Personal growth opportunities available in a career can include factors such as job status, job mobility and skills demand (Salami, 2007). Ballout (2007) contends that an organisation's size and its internal promotion practices can also influence an individual's career choices and aspirations. This is confirmed by the study of Myburgh (2005) which found that promotion and career advancement are two of the most influential career choice factors for first-year

accounting students. Career choices are also based on personal-fit and the reputation, practices and policies of an organisation (Cable & Judge, 1994) as well as an organisation's community involvement, employee relations and product quality (Turban & Greening, 1997), all of which play a role in an organisation's appeal. Therefore, theorists state that there is a significant emphasis on environmental fit. Individuals will choose careers that best utilise their knowledge, skills and abilities. Ballout (2007) concurs that there is a great need for the person-environment fit and individuals prefer jobs and careers with organisations which advocate values similar to their own. De Bruin (2001) concurs and states that although there may be many social and technological changes in the working environment, individuals' values and interests are bound to remain important and therefore individuals will always seek a working environment which will satisfy their psychological needs. The person-job fit is also imperative as studies by Cable and DeRue (2002) and Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) have indicated, namely that high levels of person-job fit positively relate to job satisfaction, career satisfaction, occupational commitment, career involvement, organisational commitment and career success, but negatively relate to employee turnover.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) introduced the perceived organisational support (POS) programme which relates to the development of employee commitment to an organisation and the degree to which employees believe the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. The argument is that perceived organisational support would lead to increased rewards, and that it is a mutually beneficial relationship. In the study of Ballout (2007), it was found that individuals with high levels of person-organisation fit will invest more in career development and will foster networking relationships with other individuals (peers, mentors and supervisors) as well as engage in

career decisions which will focus more on work satisfaction, upward moves, promotions and higher remuneration.

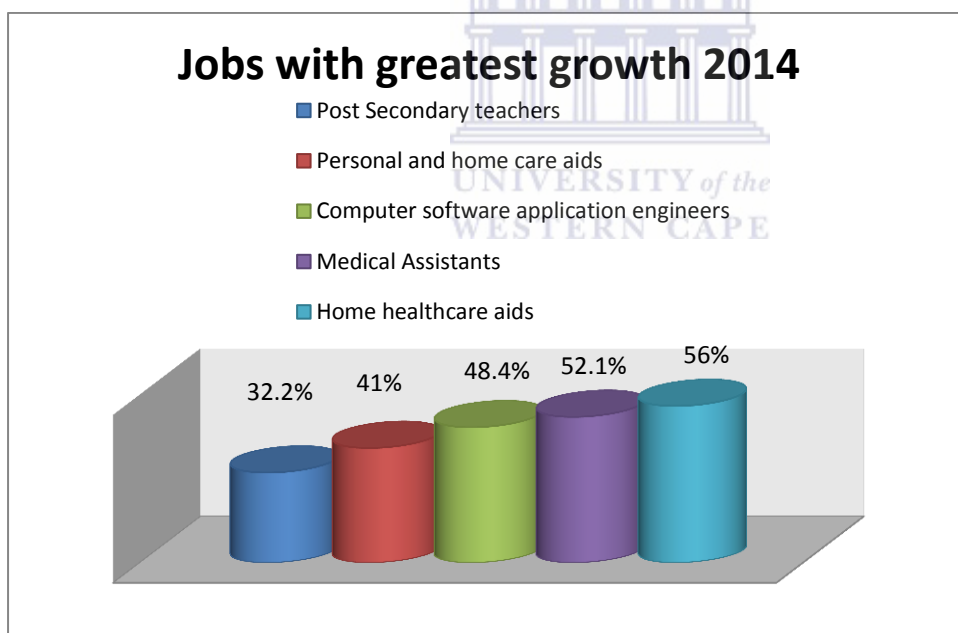
Environmental variables also relate to knowledge demands, part-time work experience that the individual may have or is currently acquiring, and the availability of tertiary education institutions (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Environmental variables may also refer to work values which, according to Super (1980); include the physical environment, security, economic return and supervision. A study conducted by Porfeli (2007) found that a high school student's future work value system was largely influenced by early work experience, whether part- or full-time. Salami (2007) further states that work values can be related to vocational interests, job skills and occupational choices. Previous work experience can also assist in making a career choice and influence career development (Super, 1980). Johnson and Mortimer (2002) state that adolescents' work experiences are important as it is part of a larger scale of activities they participate in outside school hours. These early work experiences are a basic introduction to the employment sector, and have the potential to shape these individuals' work habits, attitudes, and their occupational interests (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002). More so, individuals' exposure to undesirable work situations will allow them to reflect on what kind of work they would like to do, and what qualifications or credentials they would need in order to pursue a particular career. A study by Aronson, Mortimer, Zieman and Hacker (1996) found that some of the youths in the study expressed the view that their work experience had a direct influence on career choice. They indicated that their work experience was positive and beneficial; they felt that through work experience they have acquired skills and learned to take responsibility.

Ballout (2007) and Becker (1975) postulate that the human capital theory assumes that the result of investing in human capital attributes (e.g., education, training and experience) are higher levels of work performance and organisational rewards (e.g., remuneration, benefits and promotions). Therefore, individuals will be attracted to organisations where there is a balance between human capital attributes and organisational rewards. The study by Cable and Judge (1994) supports this as it examines the perceptions of engineering and hotel administration students in regards to remuneration preferences and career choices. They found that the remuneration and compensation policy and system of an organisation attracted these individuals more as it conformed to their own individual personal characteristics and goals. Work experience builds human capital which could enable, especially young people, to demand higher wages as they move from job to job (Johnson & Mortimer, 2002). Studies conducted by Paolillo and Estes (1982) and Bundy and Norris (1992) identified factors such as job market consideration, job satisfaction, job security, job availability, job flexibility, and opportunities for short- as well as long-term advancement in influencing career choices. Similarly, Khan and Hamdani (2007) found that Pakistani students' choices to pursue a career in anesthesia were influenced by career specialty and increased economic and job prospects.

Greenberg and Baron (2008) highlight that individuals favour occupations in which there is a bigger likelihood of career opportunities, and would rather avoid positions in which opportunities are limited or on the decline. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 illustrate the projected summary of jobs that show the greatest growth, and jobs that show the greatest decline by 2014. Figure 2.4 indicates that jobs in home healthcare (56%), medicine (52.1%) and computer software engineering (48.1%) are expected to grow more rapidly, as opposed to the bleak picture painted for jobs that were once viewed as traditional but are declining steadily (Figure 2.5). This includes jobs that involve physical orientation of machines such as textile

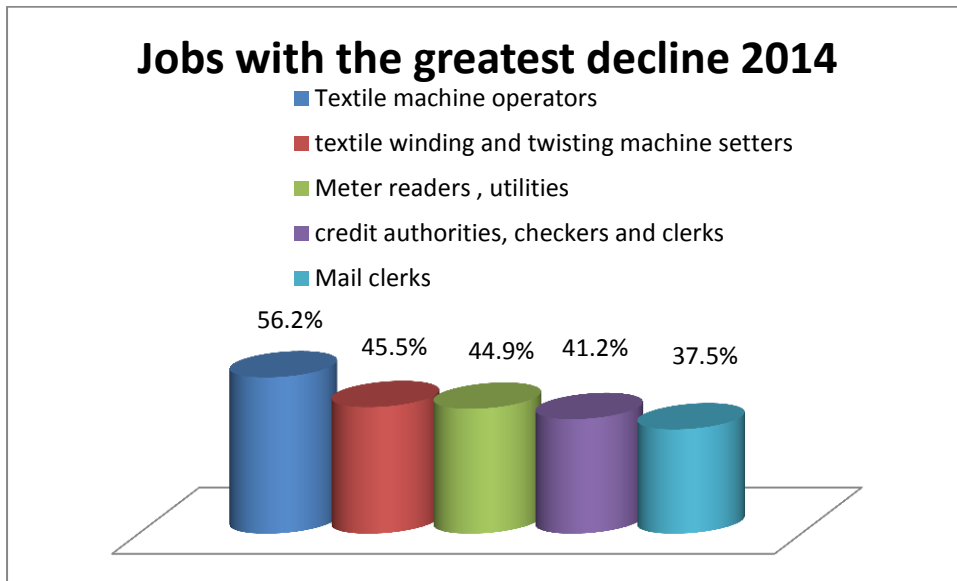
machine operators with a 56.2 % decline. This drastic change is attributed to the fact that in modern industrial and manufacturing industries fewer people are needed as they are being replaced by computer-assisted equipment (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). The increase in projected, and even current, openings for technological and medical jobs usually capture peoples' attention when considering which career to pursue (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). Behrend et al. (2007), on the other hand, highlight that in the past few years there has been a decline in the number of students choosing primary care careers (e.g., family practice and general internal medicine) in America as more students are opting for plastic surgery and emergency medicine.

Figure 2.4. Jobs with the greatest growth in number: Outlook through 2014



Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2008). *Behavior in Organization* (9th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson International.

Figure 2.5. Jobs with greatest decline in number: Outlook through 2014



Greenberg, J., & Baron, R. A. (2008). *Behavior in Organization* (9th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson International.



2.10. Career indecision

In the previous section the factors that influence career choice were examined. However, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, this is just the tip of the iceberg, as the saying goes, as there is more to the process of making a career choice. Career decision-making tasks involve matching an individual's needs, motives, values, talents and developmental processes which can be affected by both environmental and situational variables (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Brown (2004) is of the opinion that career decision-making is an ongoing process which is not always a sequential process, and comprises actions such as thinking carefully, developing criteria, making adjustments, connecting opportunities, narrowing down options and making decisions. According to Bright et al. (2005), career decision-making includes various influences that are related to choices concerning education, jobs, training, careers and retirement. It has been suggested that the manner in which an individual copes with decision-

making tasks during this process is important as it will affect how the career choice is implemented (Germeijs & Verschueren, 2007).

To illustrate the career decision-making process the study will review the work and theory of Tiedeman, O'Hara and Miller-Tiederman (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). The theory postulates that career choice and career development are decision-making processes which involve the development of one's ego identity over time. This identity develops through differentiation and reintegration, whereas the former is a process where the individual distinguishes between him- or herself and the environment (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Reintegration suggests that there is an examination of the different aspects of the self, for example, looking at the individual's experience and work environment. When differentiation and reintegration are combined, they form a decision-making process and through this experience and knowledge are constantly formed. The decision-making process can further be divided into two stages, namely anticipation and implementation (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

Anticipation:

1. Exploration: The individual becomes aware of the job requirements and possibilities.
2. Crystallisation: The individual becomes focused on particular and alternative choices.
3. Choice: The individual makes a tentative choice.
4. Clarification: The individual organises and prepares to implement the choice.

Implementation:

1. Induction: The individual enters the job or career.
2. Reformation: The individual becomes proficient in the job and may be confident in his or her choice.

3. Reintegration: Takes place when individuals find meaningful experiences that may provide them with a perspective of themselves and the work environment.

According to Kleiman et al. (2004), the career decision-making process can be complex and may require extensive effort and attention in order for the individual to make an informed choice about a career. Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) differentiate between six tasks that are important for the career decision-making process in relation to the implementation of choice. As one can see, these tasks overlap the steps described in the decision-making process as set out above:

- 1) Orientation to choice: The individual is aware that there is a need to make a choice, and has the motivation to engage in a career decision-making process.
- 2) Self-exploration: The individual engages in gathering information about him- or herself.
- 3) Broad exploration of the environment: The individual gathers relevant information about career alternatives.
- 4) In-depth exploration of the environment: The individual gathers more detailed information about a summarised list of career alternatives.
- 5) Decisional status: The individual evaluates his or her progress in choosing an alternative.
- 6) Commitment: Individuals examine their confidence in the career choice.

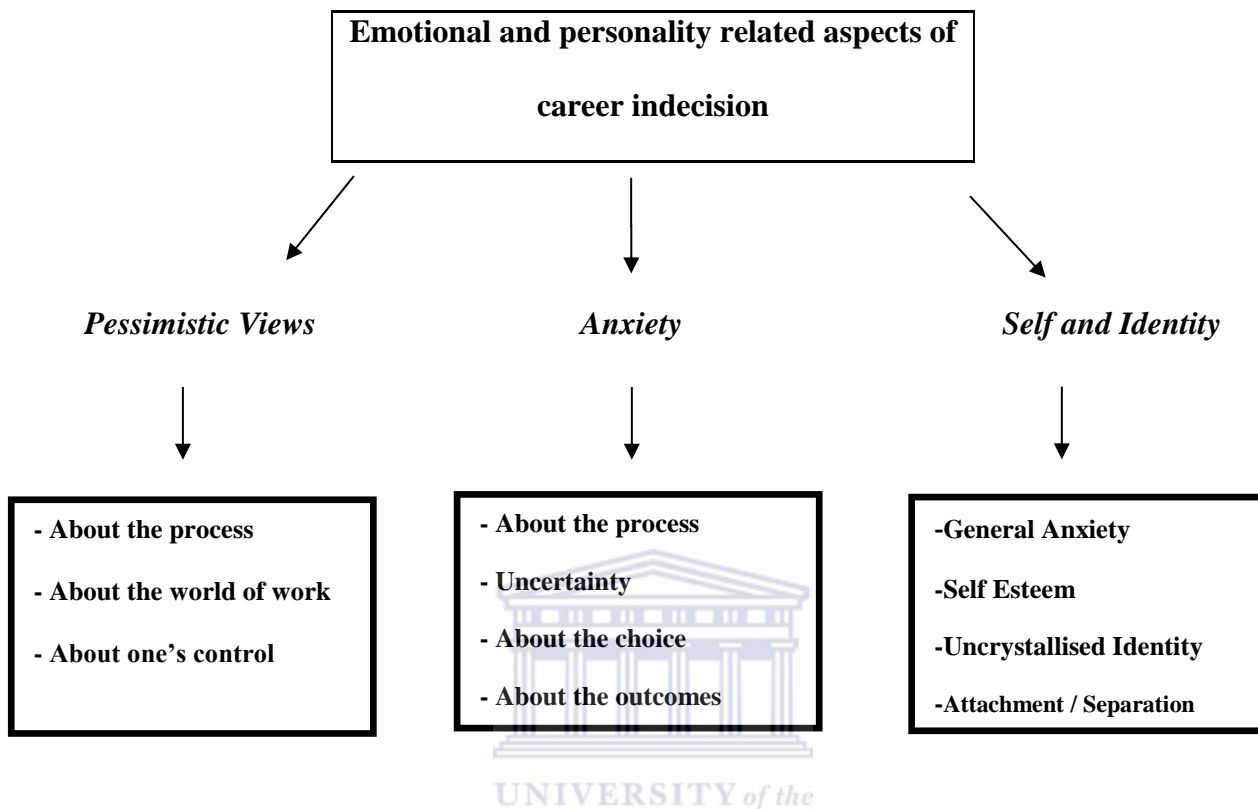
Therefore, the ideal decision maker is described as an individual who is aware of the need to make a decision, who is ready to make a decision, and who is capable of making the right decision based on appropriate processes and their compatibility with the individual's goals (Kleiman et al., 2004). However, few individuals hardly ever meet the benchmark when it comes to effective career decision making and career planning and this ultimately leads to career indecision.

Career indecision can be defined as individuals' inability or the difficulty that they may experience when making effective career decisions (Gati, et al., 2010; Osipow, 1999). Career indecision can be seen as a developmental stage that individuals may go through in the process of making career-related decisions (Osipow, 1999). Osipow (1999) summarises career indecision as a state that comes and goes over a period of time. Decisions are made, implemented, grow outdated, and eventually lead to the need for making new decisions; and then the whole process begins again. This creates a temporary state of indecision, for example, in an individual who has made a career choice, then enters the career and has to decide on further development such as specialisation, further training or seeking other opportunities. Kleiman et al. (2004) claim that the main contributors to career indecision were identified as an individual's lack of readiness, a lack of information and an inconsistent flow of information. They emphasise that when individuals do not fully explore their career choices and fail to link them to their own interests, individual preferences and goals it can lead to career indecision. Economic variables such as occupational opportunities, knowledge demands and economic growth and situational variables such as family situations, peer group pressure and cultural factors all play a pivotal role in career decision making, and also contribute towards career indecision (Rousseau & Venter, 2009). Individuals often struggle and have difficulty planning and making effective career decisions. Although anyone can struggle with career indecision, most studies have shown that students and high school pupils are most likely to experience career indecisiveness. Barton (as cited in O'Shea & Harrington, 2003) emphasise that students, graduates and dropouts alike have a deficiency in career planning when they enter both the labour market and postsecondary education.

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) argue that career decision making and career self-efficacy are strongly related. Career self-efficacy can be defined as the degree to which an individual's belief can be transferred to other tasks necessary for making career decisions. A low degree of career decision-making self-efficacy can lead to avoidance of career decision tasks, prolong career indecision, and retain self-debilitating expectations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006) whilst high career decision-making self-efficacy can lead to individuals becoming more active in their career decision-making behaviours and activities (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Bandura (1982) concurs and adds that individuals with low self-efficacy retain and perpetuate debilitating expectations, and such individuals will likely be prone to avoidance activities and defensive behaviour, and in the process their set outcomes will be devalued. Quimby and DeSantis (2006) argue that career development of women, in particular identified self-efficacy, as a critical factor in their decision to choose non-traditional occupations. The study of Gianakos (1999) confirms that career choices are directly associated with differences in career decision-making self-efficacy. In this study, people with stable career patterns, compared to those with unstable career patterns, reported significantly higher confidence in their ability to successfully undertake career-related tasks such as goal selection, gathering career information, problem solving, self-appraisal, and engaging in realistic planning.

Other factors that may influence career indecision and career choice are illustrated below in Figure 2.5 which includes the pessimistic views, anxiety, self-concept and identity, and the processes of how these factors may influence an individual.

Figure 2.6. The taxonomy of emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision-making difficulties.



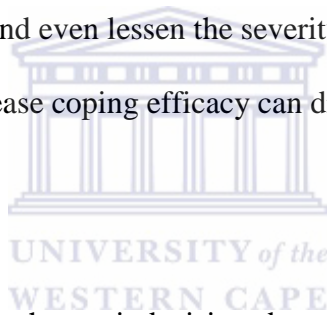
Saka, N., Gati, I., & Kelly, K. R. (2008). Emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision making difficulties. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16(4), 403-424.

2.10.1. Pessimistic view

The pessimistic view examines an individual's tendency to focus on negative aspects and outcomes. During the career decision-making process, this pessimistic view becomes apparent when the individual adopts a negative view about the world of work. The individual will therefore have low career-making self-efficacy, low motivation, and a low level of control over the process and outcomes (Saka, Gati & Kelly, 2008).

2.10.2. Anxiety

Various aspects of anxiety are known to influence career choices and cause career indecisiveness (Faqua, Newman & Seaworth 1988; Meldahl & Muchinsky, 1997; Santos, 2001). Bandura (1982) relates anxiety to the psychodynamic theory, the conditioning theory and the social learning theory. The psychodynamic theory attributes anxiety to intra-psychic conflicts over expressing taboo impulses; hence anxiety is rooted in prohibited impulse (Bandura, 1982). The conditioning theory assumes anxiety is based on previous experiences that an individual may have had and which had fear-provoking elements relating to painful experiences that the individual encountered. The social learning theory states that anxiety is the inability to handle certain situations feared by an individual. However, the individual has the ability to prevent, terminate, and even lessen the severity of events. Bandura (1982) advises that experiences that increase coping efficacy can diminish the arousal of fear and anxiety.



There is evidence that individuals who are indecisive about their career path will have higher anxiety levels than those who are sure about their future occupation (Faqua et al., 1988). It confirms that there is a relationship between career indecision and anxiety. The study of Leong and Chervinko (1996) supports this statement, showing that perfectionism, high levels of self-criticism, and fear of commitment may be correlated with career indecisiveness. However, a negative correlation between tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty as well anxiety in one's educational environment may also influence career decision making (DeRoma, Martin & Kessler, 2003).

There are four categories of anxiety:

1. The first category, namely *anxiety about the process*, refers to the high levels of stress that individuals may experience prior to the decision-making process on a career path.
2. The second category, namely *anxiety relating to the uncertainty involved in choosing a career* refers to three main aspects of uncertainty (Saka et al., 2008):
 - Uncertainty about the future,
 - Anxiety about being in an undecided state, and
 - Anxiety related to low tolerance for uncertainty.
3. The third category namely, *anxiety about the process of choosing a career*, consists of four characteristics. These characteristics are identified in the study of Serling and Betz (1990) and include
 - perfectionism about choosing,
 - the fear of losing other potentially suitable options,
 - fear of choosing an unsuitable occupation, and
 - anxiety about one's responsibility for the act of choosing.
4. The fourth category is *anxiety about the outcome* which includes the individual's concerns about the implications of choosing a career path which may relate to the individual's fear of failure (Saka et al., 2008).

2.10.3. Self-concept and identity

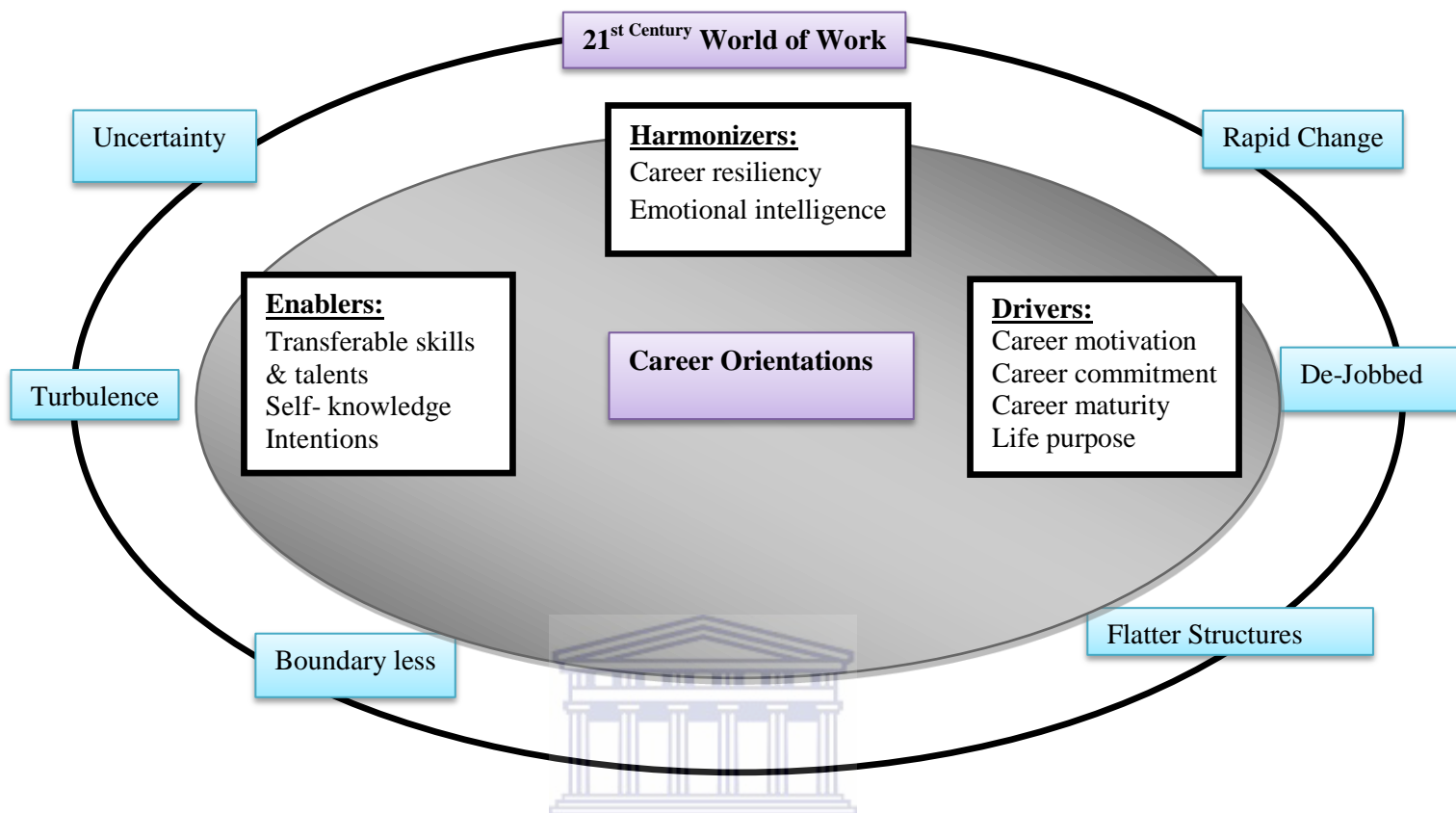
Self-concept and identity relate to the individual's inability to form a stable, independent personal and vocational identity and a positive self-concept (Saka et al., 2008). This may also be related to difficulties that the individual may experience such as fear and anxiety about being separated from his or her family, attachment difficulties, and also dependency issues (Saka et al., 2008). A lack of self-esteem can also negatively correlate with career

indecisiveness, and the studies of Saka et al. (2008) and Santos (2001) revealed that the lower one's self-esteem, the higher one's indecision.

2.11. Modern workplace and career success

The modern working environment has increasingly changed over the last few years and subsequently, due to these changes and developments, an individual's career orientation may be affected by various internal and external factors (Figure 2.7). Characteristics of the modern workplace are rapid changes, turbulence, uncertainty, flatter structures and boundaryless careers, and these have led to the decline in traditional jobs (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Other notable changes in the current work environment are the increase in job losses, internationalisation, technological advances, changing organisational structures, and the increased cultural diversity of the workforce (Greenhouse et al., 2000). These changes do not only affect the manner in which operational business and budgets and the implementation of strategic plans are conducted, but also how organisations plan and manage their employees' careers (Ballout, 2007). Therefore, the underlying modern career systems in organisations are shaped by social and economic forces which provide a platform for more global careers, a broader introduction of females and other minority groups into different roles, major restructuring of organisations, and a less stable environment (Baruch, 2006).

Figure 2.7. Characteristics underlying a successful career in the Twenty-first Century



Schreuder, A. M. G., & Coetzee, M. (2006). *Careers: an Organisational perspective* (3rd ed.). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Co. Ltd.

Greenhouse et al. (2000) and Baruch (2006) state that there has been a reevaluation of the psychological contract between employers and employees due to the rapid changes in organisational structures. Modern organisations are adopting a transactional psychological contract which ascribes lower levels of commitment from both parties due to the organisation's need to be more flexible in highly competitive local and global environments (Greenhouse et al., 2000). Waterman and Waterman (1994) contends that employees are no longer expected to exchange job performance and loyalty for job security; instead they are expected to be flexible in accepting new assignments, and show their willingness to develop new skills. These assignments and developing skills form part of an organisation's needs, but

in return the organisation does not promise future employment but rather employability through development and continuous professional growth (Waterman & Waterman, 1994). Kaye (1985) also notes that in the past organisations were not as vigilant about cost control; however, current economic situations are forcing them to be more conscientious. In previous years, flexibility in cost control also allowed employers to move obsolescent employees out of main activities into less vital positions in the organisation where they normally remained until retirement (Kaye, 1985). However, this too has changed as it is no longer viable as the demands on organisations grow.

The traditional perspective of careers in organisations has also deviated from the hierarchical view in order to allow employees to succeed and give them the opportunity to be promoted within the organisation. Currently, careers are no longer that rigid due to the changing environments in organisations and society as a whole (Baruch, 2006). Baruch (2006) states that although hierarchic elements still exist it now has to coexist in line with changes, the new psychological contract and protean careers. Greenhouse et al. (2000) are of the opinion that in the modern work environment individuals who understand themselves, who can identify changes in the environment and create opportunities and learn from their mistakes, would most likely be able to achieve career success and satisfaction. From an individual's perspective, the world of work can provide career opportunities rather than just jobs, and individuals' career decisions are guided by their career orientations and values (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Therefore, drivers (Figure 2.7) help individuals to experiment with career possibilities which are based on their perceptions of the persons they could become or the possible working roles they could undertake or experiment with. On the other hand (Figure 2.7) enablers, which include transferable skills, talents, self-knowledge and intentions, can assist individuals to succeed in their current or prospective careers, and there are also have

active controls called harmonisers which could include individuals' resilience, emotional intelligence and coping resources which are in place to keep these drivers in balance so that individuals are not subjected to burn-out in the process of pursuing or reinventing their careers (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

Understanding what the modern working environment is all about is in turn linked to individuals' career prospects and expectations. However, one can also examine how individuals define success, and whether this definition of success is in line with the expectations of what the organisation can offer, and to what extent success is achievable in the modern organisation and workplace. Career success can also be defined as the outcomes of desirable work-related experiences over a period of time (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; Ballout, 2007). Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) explain that how individuals define career success strongly influences their career choices and decisions. To one person success may mean promotion, while to another becoming an expert within his or her field is a personal definition of success. Besides tangible success such as promotion and financial gains, success can also refer to individuals being challenged in the work environment. A successful career can be viewed as one where an individual has developed a variety of skills and abilities which they can use to assist others to grow and develop; this in turn relates to the individual's social contribution (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006)

Ozer and Benet-Martinez (2006) and Judge, Cable, Boudreau and Bretz (1994) state that career success could be understood as having extrinsic components such as security and remuneration, and intrinsic components such as satisfaction, all of which could be predicted by childhood consciousness, openness, and emotional stability. As one can see there is a variety of broad definition of career success. Tosi, Rizzo and Carrol (1994) distinguish

between two types of success, namely objective success and psychological success.

Objective success refers to elements such as remuneration, reputation, position and status whereas psychological success refers to what individuals value the most: an increase in self-esteem and pride in their achievements (e.g., feelings of pride, inner peace and family happiness).

When individuals examine their jobs or careers, and determine whether it corresponds with their personal values, they are more likely to have career success than those who do not (Kuijpers, Schyns & Scheerens, 2006). Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) add that there is a relationship between an individual's career anchors (self-perceived talents and abilities, motives and needs, attitudes and values) and the perception of his or her own job (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Little career success can urge individuals to reflect on their motives, and if they are unhappy they become more aware of any discrepancies between their preferences and the practicality or application of these preferences in their work (Kuijpers et al., 2006). Therefore, success in one task or role can facilitate success in another; however, difficulty in one role is more likely to lead to difficulty in another (Super, 1980). Success that may come at too high a price may cause failure; a balance is therefore required.

From an organisational perspective, structural characteristics such as an organisation's size and the availability of opportunities can define success for an individual as a larger organisation may have a broader hierarchy and may have more opportunities available for career advancement. In turn, individuals' potential to earn increases as they move up the corporate ladder (Ballout, 2007). An added structural characteristic is the availability of internal promotion opportunities which influence individuals' career mobility. As discussed earlier, image norms or stereotypes about a certain occupation or industry can also influence

individuals. These stereotypes dictate what the accepted norms are in order to enter a career, and include what image and physical attractiveness individuals must project or have in order to accomplish career success (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) conclude that because of certain business trends such as downsizing and restructuring, the meaning of career success should not be as dependent on the Eurocentric definition of career success such as promotions, salary increases and perks, but should rather reflect individuals' perceptions of their own psychological success. To ensure this, organisations should allow employees to succeed on their own terms within the framework of organisational needs, and not treat it as two separate entities, namely organisational needs and individual success (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

2.12. Organisational career support

In the previous section the researcher discussed what possible factors may influence an individual to pursue or redirect to a particular career choice, and whether or not the choice is based on individual, situational or environmental variables. However, one should also recognise that although these factors may have an influence, there are also certain career processes or stages such as career development, career planning, and career management that could also have an impact on individuals' career choices. At times, an individual undergoes these processes in order to establish whether there is a person-job fit, and whether there is a correlation between interest, skills, abilities and knowledge and the current or perspective career. The individual can also evaluate whether the career choice can assist in realising goals, needs and desires. These processes force individuals to assess whether their career goals and aspirations are realistic, and may also provide information about a career choice which can either assist them with making an initial career choice or to redirect in terms of either upward mobility or a change of industry, sector or the career itself.

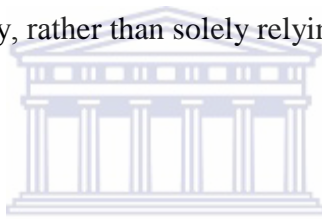
One of the key objectives of an organisational career support system is to expose employees to these processes of career planning, career development and career management in order to increase their employability and to broaden the potential range of job roles they can perform (Patrick & Kumar, 2011). Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) state that organisations have a responsibility to assist employees in making career decisions and have an added responsibility to create an environment which fosters personal growth and provides training and development opportunities to individuals. However, it should be noted that for success in fostering career development and learning the organisation is reliant on the active support and buy-in from top management, supervisors and employees alike (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Nel et al. (2002) state that efforts and responsibilities are shared amongst the organisation and the employees alike as career development constitute a joint venture and process, and as the employees initiate the planning of their careers the organisation provides the means and structure for development. Baruch (2006) states that organisations are not entirely exempt from managing employees' careers, even in the ever-changing work environment. This argument is based on the premise that even if some aspects of the relationship between employer and employee has substantially shifted (e.g., the psychological contract), the majority of organisations are still performing in a relatively stable environment and are applying tried-and-tested management strategies (Baruch, 2006). Even though individuals are participating more actively in their career management, it does not mean that the organisation should not do so. This is especially true in an organisational setting where careers can be a means of moving up the hierarchic ladder to higher earnings, status and power. These could be a measurement of success by the individual (Baruch, 2006).

Therefore organisations are revisiting their approaches to profitability (Kaye, 1985), human capital (Baruch, 2006), human resource management and employee development, all of

which will give them a competitive edge in the changing work environment. Consequently, they are starting to view their employees as an investment in the future of the organisation (Kaye, 1985). It has been documented that organisations are now more than ever maximising their human resources and realising that organisational goals cannot be reached if they are beleaguered by high turnover and low productivity, or even more important, if they do not have an adequate pool from which to draw management talent (Kaye, 1985). Ballout (2007) also states that because the workplace has become less traditional, career paths and policies which support career performance and career choice behaviours are becoming increasingly more pivotal to individuals' advancement. Therefore, organisations are constantly trying to improve their selection processes and are attempting to attract individuals who share the same values as their own. By the same token, individuals are seeking career opportunities with organisations where they will not only realise their career ambitions, but where they believe they would fit in and which would match their personalities, talents, abilities and skills as well as the organisation's reputation, environment, culture, and policies (Ballout, 2007). Current employees, especially top performers, cannot be retained with only remuneration packages and benefits. There are broader aspects that play a vital role in retaining talent such as organisational culture, individual growth, and the availability of opportunities (Dick, Smith & Martinus, 2001).

In contrast, Arnold et al. (1998) argue that in the modern workplace there is a greater need for individuals to be more future-orientated and to ensure that they keep their skills and knowledge updated in order to remain employable. The changing working relationship that has emerged in the wake of economic and operational pressures is based on an individual's responsibility to ensure development and broadening of skill set (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Weng and McElroy's (2010) study found that individuals who are interested in

managing their careers and have a clear vocational self-concept are more likely to make higher-quality decisions about their jobs and careers. Therefore, organisations need to note that contemporary employees are more active and assertive than those of the past, and they demand a higher degree of control over their own lives and careers (Greenhouse et al., 2000). In the study of Ballout (2007), which examines the link between career success and organisational support, it is argued that individuals to a certain extent have control over their career choices and career advancement, and can therefore assess their own career prospects and put in place appropriate career plans and activities which may ultimately lead to career success. Therefore, individuals must take a more proactive role in managing their own careers, and should actively pursue career strategies which are also in line with the organisation's context and strategy, rather than solely relying on an organisational career system (Ballout, 2007).



Baruch (2006) states that the modern organisation has adopted a new role when it comes to career support systems; these include being supportive and an enabler and developer of its human resources. The old command-and-control approach has given way to the supportive and developmental approach. Greenhouse et al. (2000) advise that it is in the organisation's best interest that career development and management programmes are implemented in order to minimise career stagnation, especially in organisations that have expanded rapidly or even downsized as the number of people expecting promotions may exceed the number of vacancies or opportunities available. Employees may reach a plateau where they find themselves in positions which offer little chance of promotion and even fewer opportunities to increase their responsibilities (Greenhouse et al., 2000). This can lead to lower levels of motivation or employees may leave the organisation either for other opportunities or entrepreneurial ventures. These developmental interventions should rather be perceived as

processes and tools put in place to assist employees to become more change resilient, more secure within themselves and their future as the organisation holistically adjusts to the demands of the changing market and business environments (Patrick & Kumar, 2011).

However, the reality is that organisational career support activities are more organisation-centered. Organisations facilitate experience by exposing individuals to activities such as job assignments, job rotation, evaluation of individual potential, appraisals, and training and development experiences (Iles & Mabey, 1993). However, organisations do not always plan their activities in accordance with individuals' career preferences but in line with organisational requirements. An effective approach is to match employees' capabilities and interests to the requirements and goals of the organisation (Iles & Mabey, 1993).

Kaye (1985) states that although many organisations implement a variety of human resources related to techniques such as recruitment, performance management, training programmes, management development and other learning forums, these are seldom effective because they are not integrated closely with others or are at times at odds with other programmes.

Contributing to the ineffectiveness of these programmes could also be that these programs do not take into account an individual's actual career interests. Iles and Mabey (1993) stress the importance of having synergy between the reasoning behind the implementation of the development programmes and the desired state of employee development. Patrick and Kumar (2011) state that a well-designed career support system enables the organisation to access the existing in-house talent needed for promotions by matching the skills, experience and aspirations of employees to an organisation's needs. This system can also be aligned to other organisational functions such as compensation, attraction and motivation (Patrick & Kumar, 2011). By encouraging employees to grow and reach their full potential the organisation is making a direct investment in its own interests. If employees' careers are managed

effectively, systematically processed and mapped out, employees will be able to realise their own potential and are more likely to remain with the same employer until they retire (Nel et al., 2002).

In the study of Hite and McDonald (2003), they examine the career aspirations of non-managerial women and state that organisation-based interventions such as human resources development can play a pivotal role in assisting women to enhance their career paths. Studies of Ragins (1998), Wentling (1996) and Ohlott, Ruderman and McCauley (1994) found that there are barriers to the development of women in the workplace, especially aspirant female managers. Women who participated in the studies listed discrimination, unsupportive bosses, a lack of understanding of the internal organisational political climate, lack of general management and line experience, less exposure to projects involving risk and visibility, and difficulty adapting to corporate culture hindrances to advancement and opportunities as barriers to advancement. Hite and McDonald (2003) also found that for women there exists a lack of exposure to organisational career activities which could be instrumental in their career development. Although women in the study highlighted that there were training programmes offered within the organisation, Hite and McDonald (2003) suggest that these women could also have benefitted from career planning to assist them in exploring ways to maximise their knowledge, skills, abilities and potential which would determine whether or not they remain in their current roles. The authors also state that career-enhancement initiatives can assist these women not only to be promoted in order to remain challenged and interested in their careers, but this can also be achieved by continuous training and development programmes. Participation in development activities is pivotal to the success and effectiveness thereof. Noe (1996) found that positive supervisor and manager support and engagement activities such as advice, referral and feedback can affect individuals' willingness to engage in development

activities, and that this is critical to the individual's performance and success. This was confirmed in the study of Hite and McDonald (2003) which found that female non-managerial participants were of the opinion that management ultimately exercised their power to decide on advancement opportunities.

An individual may seek assistance for career choice or career development for either initial or future careers. These assistance and support activities may include career counsellors, workshops, books or contact with external experts in a particular field or within an organisation as part of its human resources strategy, and may include career management programmes, assessments, training, etc. The aim of these activities, however, is to give the individual a holistic perspective before or when deciding on a career choice, changing or enhancing career paths, or pursuing a new career. This section will discuss the career development process and its application to the work environment. From an organisational career development perspective, closer attention will be given to the two processes involved, namely, career planning and career management. There will also be a discussion about the various organisational career support activities.

2.13. Career development

Career development can be defined as *“an ongoing process by which individuals' progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relatively unique set of issues, themes and tasks”* (Greenhouse et al., 2000, p. 13). Langley, du Toit and Herbst (1996) state that career development is a lifelong process and add that within this process the individual finds himself facing different work-related tasks which follow one another in a predetermined way, and can only move to the next stage of development once these tasks have been mastered. Savickas (2002) agrees that an individual's successful adaptation to each of the

identified development stages allows for more effective functioning as a student, employee or retiree as well as laying the foundation for mastering any preceding tasks. Skipping tasks in the sequence, however, is ill-advised as it may result in the individual experiencing difficulty in later stages (Savickas, 2002). Super and Hall (1978) and Super (1980) identified five developmental stages that an individual goes through, namely growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline (Figure 2.8). It also highlights the various career stages and tasks that accompany each of the development stages. As the individual moves between the different life stages (Figure 2.8), he or she may also be faced with various choices that need to be made as the core focus alters throughout the process.

Super (1980) explains that, for example, if an individual goes full circle through the various stages, during the growth stage he or she may become aware of the need to make a career choice. In the exploration stage the individual will formulate questions, identify facts, seek data, evaluate and compare old and new data, and identify alternatives, potential actions and outcomes. The alternatives will then be measured in terms of values and objectives, and he or she will then, in the establishment stage, select a preferred action plan. In both the exploration and establishment stages there is a need to continuously collect data as well as to evaluate outcomes with the modification of plans (Super, 1980). In the maintenance stage individuals concentrate on maintaining what they have established, and would most likely reevaluate their work experiences and their career self-concept (Savickas, 2002). This may lead to their changing organisations, careers or fields. The last stage is the decline stage; here the individual is involved in deceleration of the developmental tasks, and he or she is most likely to focus on retirement planning and retirement living (Savickas, 2002).

Career development also examines the degree of career maturity which relates to the extent to which individuals are prepared to make career-related decisions, and whether these decisions are made rationally and with adequate knowledge. It also examines the extent to which the individual is able to master particular career developmental tasks which are applicable to their stage of life. Career guidance is vital to establish the individual's stage of career maturity in order to estimate which tasks relating to career development need more attention in order that career planning can occur (Langley et al., 1996). According to Bergh and Theron (1999), during the development and the incorporation of the physical, cognitive, moral and psychological domains of individuals, they must obtain certain developmental competencies which are related to learning, work and career choices. These tasks arise during specific periods of individuals' lives, and if successfully achieved, can lead to happiness and success. Failure to achieve these tasks may lead to unhappiness; they might experience difficulty with tasks later on, and may be subject to disapproval within society (Bergh & Theron, 1999). The acquisition of certain competencies and abilities can enable individuals to distinguish between tasks that they like and those that they dislike, to accept responsibility to do tasks and to complete these tasks within a specified time. This will enable them to make initial career choices and to select suitable subjects, study directions or jobs (Bergh & Theron, 1999). An observation made by Themba et al. (2012) was that career maturity in the explorative and establishment phases varied significantly between individuals in the South African Air Force and the South African Navy; this could be attributed to the training programmes offered by these entities. For new recruits the South African Air Force provides a broader variety of specialised training which is more applicable to careers outside the military than training provided by the South African Navy (Themba et al., 2012).

Bergh and Theron (1999) describe and summarise career developmental tasks as those that an individual has to master prior to career entry or even before embarking on tertiary education.

The following developmental tasks include the need to acquire certain competencies to make career choices and decisions, and the development of certain attitudes:

- *Career orientation*: Describes the degree of the individual's active involvement and commitment in the process of career choices, for example, using information and abilities to solve career-choice problems that may occur.
- *Career information and career planning*: Will require the ability to explore and gather relevant information to plan and decide upon a career.
- *Consistency of career preferences*: Relates to consistency of career choice over time, and choices within career directions.
- The individual has certainty of concepts and attitudes of work and career.
- *Wisdom of vocational choices*: Evaluates how realistic the individual's choice is, employing an assessment of abilities and interests compared to the demands of the job or career. This is especially important in the transition stage (18 to 21 years of age) when the young adult has to decide on a study field and career direction, or even when starting a job.

Figure 2.8. Career stages and tasks: Views of Super and Havighurst

Ages and Phases	Task and Transition
Growth Phase (4 -14) 0-3 Pre-Vocational 4-10 Fantasy 11-12 Interest 13-14 Capacity	General physical and mental growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or little career interest • Fantasy about work, based on identification with parents • Likes and dislikes basis for job and career interest • Abilities as basis for thinking about jobs and careers • Through schoolwork learns priorities, organizing time and completing tasks
Exploration Phase (15 - 24) 15- 17 Tentative 18- 21 Transition 22- 24 Trial	Broad exploration of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various attributes (abilities, values etc.) become basis for occupational choices • More specific and realistic about career choices, study and job entry • Study and first job entry, identity as worker
Established Phase (25 – 44) 25- 30 Trial 31- 44 Stabilization	More permanent job or career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible changes of jobs and career • Productive, stable work in a given job and career • Moving ahead, maintain income and lifestyle and societal roles
Maintenance Phase(45- 65)	Progress and continuation in a given career line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding job, updating and innovating • Maintaining societal roles and possibly planning for retirement
Decline Phase (65+) 65-70 71+ Retirement	Preparation to retire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If work, deceleration and decline in capacity, plan to retire • Cease work, contemplate life

Bergh, Z. C., & Theron, A. L. (1999). *Psychology in the work context*. International Thomson Publishing (Pty) Ltd.

2.13.1. Organisational career development

The question then is: How is career development applied in the workplace? The terms career development and career management are confusing at best, and in some instances the words are used interchangeably. However, these processes are not the same, and when applied specifically to careers, they have very different purposes, roles and outcomes. Career development systems within the workplace are geared towards balancing individual career needs and the workforce requirements of the organisation (Roa, 2007). As illustrated in Figure 2.9, Rothwell et al. (2005) state that Gutteridge's working model of organisational career development refers to the outcome between the interaction of the individual's career planning and the organisation's career management process. From the aforementioned explanations (Figure 2.9), and in simpler terms, it is safe to assume that career planning is an individual process while career management is an organisational approach; the expected outcomes differ as well (Roa, 2007; Schreuder & Theron, 2004). It also appears that the two processes reinforce one another (Roa, 2007), because if individuals have not planned properly for their development they may not be ready, or even eager, to participate in any organisational career activities; in fact the reverse may even be true.

During this stage individuals may have to work through personal challenges and professional demands. Individuals in the later stage of life, as opposed to young adults, are no longer trying to find or mould themselves, but rather want to discover how they can apply what they have learned and experienced in their work lives (Rice, 2003). It is first and foremost very important that individuals understand the development tasks, roles and outcomes which are associated with every career stage (Greenhouse et al., 2000). Furthermore, organisations can then build their development programmes and experiences based on individuals' career stages (Greenhouse et al., 2000).

Realistically, from an organisational perspective, one should not be blind to the capacity and resources that organisations can offer their employees in career development activities, with both practical and financial aspects in mind. However, Kaye (1985) is of the opinion that a carefully implemented career development programme can assist an organisation as it can holistically pull all the development programmes together and link them to the organisation's bottom line. Effective career development can also assist with problems such as turnover, skills deficiencies, low morale and low productivity (Kaye, 1985). Similarly, a study by Hite and McDonald (2003) concluded that career development activities which are focused on refining the skills of non-managerial women could prepare them to adapt more productively to their life and work changes in order that they may fulfil their career as well as family goals. Cummings and Worley (2009) add that talented employees, especially women and other minority groups, are showing more preference and loyalty towards employers who offer career and leadership development opportunities.

According to Kaye (1985), a well-designed career development program allows for the following:

- 1) Identify the employee's talents and desires and allow for the employee to be put in work situations that are meaningful, and utilise their identified talents.
- 2) The employee to identify the organisation as one that respects his or her own unique abilities and which encourages growth.
- 3) Assist employees to communicate their needs and aspirations.
- 4) Enable employees to continually develop their potential and be challenged by future learning opportunities.

As a practical example, Chevron Corporation (Pty) Ltd., based in San Francisco, revisited their performance management system in order to shift the focus more on career development rather than past performance. The organisation realised that in the current climate they could not promise career advancement as it would imply upward movements and promotions, and due to economic pressures and the retrenchment of 8 000 employees this was no longer a viable option. Again in 1991, the company revisited its system and decided to focus on incorporating career-enrichment processes which were originally designed to assist employees to enhance their skills, provide job satisfaction, develop new skills, and prepare for both current and future business needs (Caudron, 1994).

Chevron's career-development initiative is voluntary and therefore through this process the employees are encouraged to take personal responsibility and accountability for their own career development. As a result, they also acquire a better understanding of their own value and skills, and are also able to see where they and their functions fit into the broader

organisational plan, and what they need to contribute to reach their personal and organisational goals (Caudron, 1994).

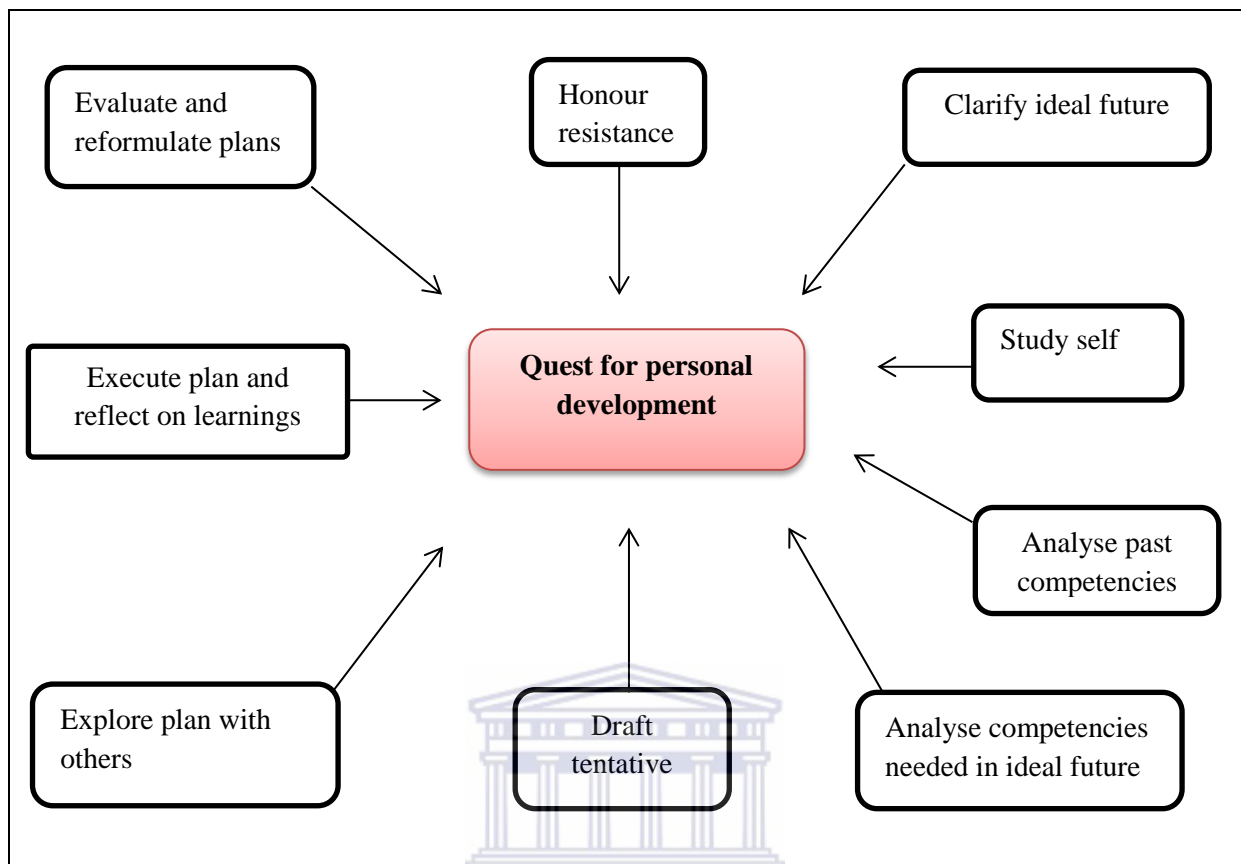
2.13.1.1. Career planning

Career planning refers to the process which enables individuals to analyse their work situations, identify their career goals, and then plan various ways to achieve their goals (Nel et al., 2002; Rothwell et al., 2005; Schreuder & Theron, 2004). As indicated in Figure 2.9 above, the career-planning process is usually seen as an individually centered approach which can include self-assessments, assessments of opportunities, and action planning for career goals (Iles & Mabey, 1993). Just as many other career-orientated processes, career planning is an ongoing process and may be very useful when making career decisions or career transitions. Rothwell et al. (2005) state that many individuals do not know what they could expect from a career, and may choose a career randomly and hope for positive outcomes. Laker and Laker (2007) state that people rarely realise that what they do in the short term will have an impact on their future professional development and career opportunities. Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) argue that career planning is pivotal as it can be linked to career success or failure which influences an individual's self-concept, identity and satisfaction with career and life. Through self-assessment and the work environment evaluation an individual must not be able to identify interests and desires as well as how these relate to certain confines such as family, financial constraints, and their own motivation (Rothwell et al., 2005). However, there is often a lack of realisation which leads to the individual's failure to plan, and this may limit his or her prospects to pursue a career. In a study by Hangrove, Inman and Crane (2005), when investigating the possible influences of family interaction, career planning and career identity, they found that more females than males participated in career-

planning activities such as consulting peers or professionals about careers, part-time or vacation jobs, and entering the job market after graduation.

Schreuder and Theron (2004) propose a career-planning model for the twenty-first century (Figure 2.10) which recognises the changes in the world of work, as discussed in the previous chapter. Schreuder and Theron (2004) state that the model is developmental in nature and has a more longitudinal approach; however, it can also assist with survival in a changing environment. Hence, change or choice does not necessarily mean changing from one job to another but it can also mean reevaluating a current job and finding new ways for personal development. This especially evident in the study of Zikic and Klehe (2006) on career planning and exploration during unemployment. The study found that the more individuals planned for their careers during this economically inactive period, the higher they rated the quality of their new jobs in the first six months in a future job. In the model proposed by Schreuder and Theron (2004) (Figure 2.10), the first stage is honour resistance, and this evaluates why individuals may feel stuck in a career as there maybe incompatibility between their needs and desires, or that the proposed plan or action has become invalid in the external environment. It is advised that individuals look at the ideal roles they would like to play as this will provide information about their aspirations, desires, fears and doubts. It is important that individuals examine their capabilities throughout their lives as they may have developed skills that they were not even aware of. In addition, individuals should examine what skills they have or will need in their ideal careers (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). The individual is required to draft a plan by writing down goals and deciding on the resources they need, and the time that they will require. It is also important that individuals receive feedback based on their plans (Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

Figure 2.10. Career-planning model for the Twenty-first century



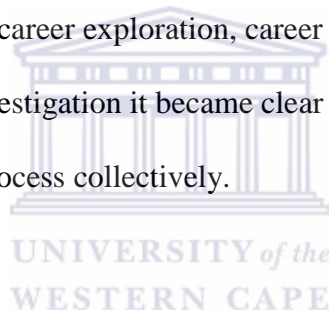
Schreuder, A.M.G., & Theron, A. L. (2004). *Careers: An organisational perspective* (2nd ed).
Landsdowne, Cape Town: Juta & Co.Ltd.

2.13.1.2. Career management

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) define career management as an ongoing process. Greenhouse et al. (2000) concur that career management is, and should be, an ongoing process because work is a central part of an individual's life. A satisfying career can promote a sense of fulfilment whereas poor career decisions can have devastating effects on an individual's sense of wellbeing. Figure 2.9, the organisational career development model, illustrates that as opposed to career planning career management is an organisational approach. Rothwell et al. (2005) agree that career management includes an organisation's overall workforce strategy, and the ultimate goal of the process is to ensure that the organisation's human

capital needs are met, and in doing so, at the appropriate levels. This may include staffing, managing talented employees, employee retention and organisational succession planning.

The career management model (Figure 2.11), as constructed by Greenhouse et al. (2000), indicates the various stages an individual has to go through and illustrates how the process attempts to elevate the compatibility and fit between the individual and his or her environment. The process starts at career exploration and ends at career appraisal, although this might not always be the case as many of the steps, or even the whole process, can be repeated and can be ongoing throughout an individual's lifespan. Although the career management model is used as a basis in this section, a more in-depth discussion about the three overlapping stages, namely career exploration, career goal setting and career appraisal will be discussed. During the investigation it became clear that the three stages encompass the overall career management process collectively.

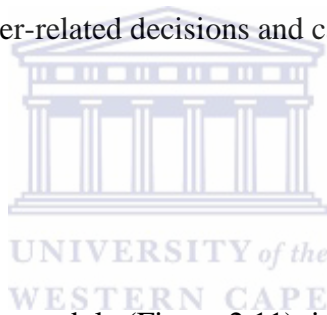


Step 1: Career exploration

Career exploration can be defined as activities which are directed at enhancing individuals' self and environmental information in order to assist them in effective career decision-making and career-development processes (Fouad et al., 2009). Through the process of exploration the individual develops a clearer sense of vocational self-concept (Weng and McElroy, 2010); hence, people are more satisfied when their career choices and jobs match their needs, values, interests and lifestyles (Greenhouse et al., 2000).

Noe's (1996) study found that the extent to which career-related information was sought by employees from peers, managers, family and other sources was linked to their motivation to participate in developmental activities and behaviours. Interestingly, a study conducted by

Fouad et al. (2006) of college students and their career service awareness, indicated that although several services were available to the students on campus, these were not utilised by most. Respondents suggested that there was a lack of awareness and interest in these services. They found that half of the students were aware of the career counselling services, two-thirds were aware of job posting and the career fair held twice a year, and even fewer students were aware of the career centre's website which is located on the university's home page, along with information detailing other career guidance resources such as workshops, job searches, and resumé assistance (Fouad et al, 2006). Career exploration also ties in with the next step of goal setting in the career management process as it allows the individual to develop an accurate career identity and assists in setting career goals, therefore assisting individuals to make effective career-related decisions and career choices (Crafford et al., 2006; Greenhouse et al., 2000).

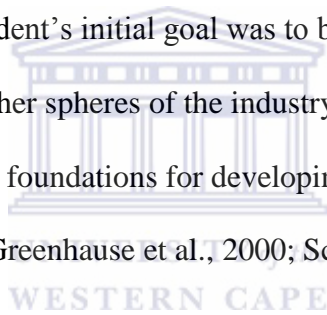


Step 2: Career goal setting

Apart from the career management module (Figure 2.11) identified in this section, the conceptual career choice model (Figure 2.2) also indicates the role that goal setting plays in making a career choice. In regards to career management processes, goal setting initiates the career-related outcomes which an individual desires to attain (Greenhouse et al., 2000). Realistically, an individual has to systematically work towards a set goal and therefore participates in some exploration, developmental activities and an evaluative process. As noted by Greenhouse et al. (2000), a career goal may not always mean promotion or a job change, but there can be an increase in individuals' skills and job responsibilities. As a theoretical basis for this argument, Greenberg and Baron (2008) claim that the career goal theory serves as a basic motivator as it provides people with the opportunity to compare their present performance to the required performance needed to succeed and to achieve the set

goal. People are thus motivated to achieve goals because in doing so it makes them feel successful and competent. It can also be expected that there might be increased performance from an individual when a goal is set as it makes it clear at what level the individual should perform to be successful (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

A study conducted by Savage, Beall and Woolley (2009) relating to the long-term and short-term career goals of pharmaceutical students indicates that upon completion of their studies the graduates' career goals were predominantly to enter the retail industry; however, these goals shifted or evolved over time. The study further shows that after five years in the field the students' preferences became divided between retail and clinical environments. This may indicate that a pharmaceutical student's initial goal was to build financial stability, and then later on seek career progress in other spheres of the industry (Savage et al., 2009). Career goals that are specific build better foundations for developing effective career strategies in order to achieve intended goals (Greenhouse et al., 2000; Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

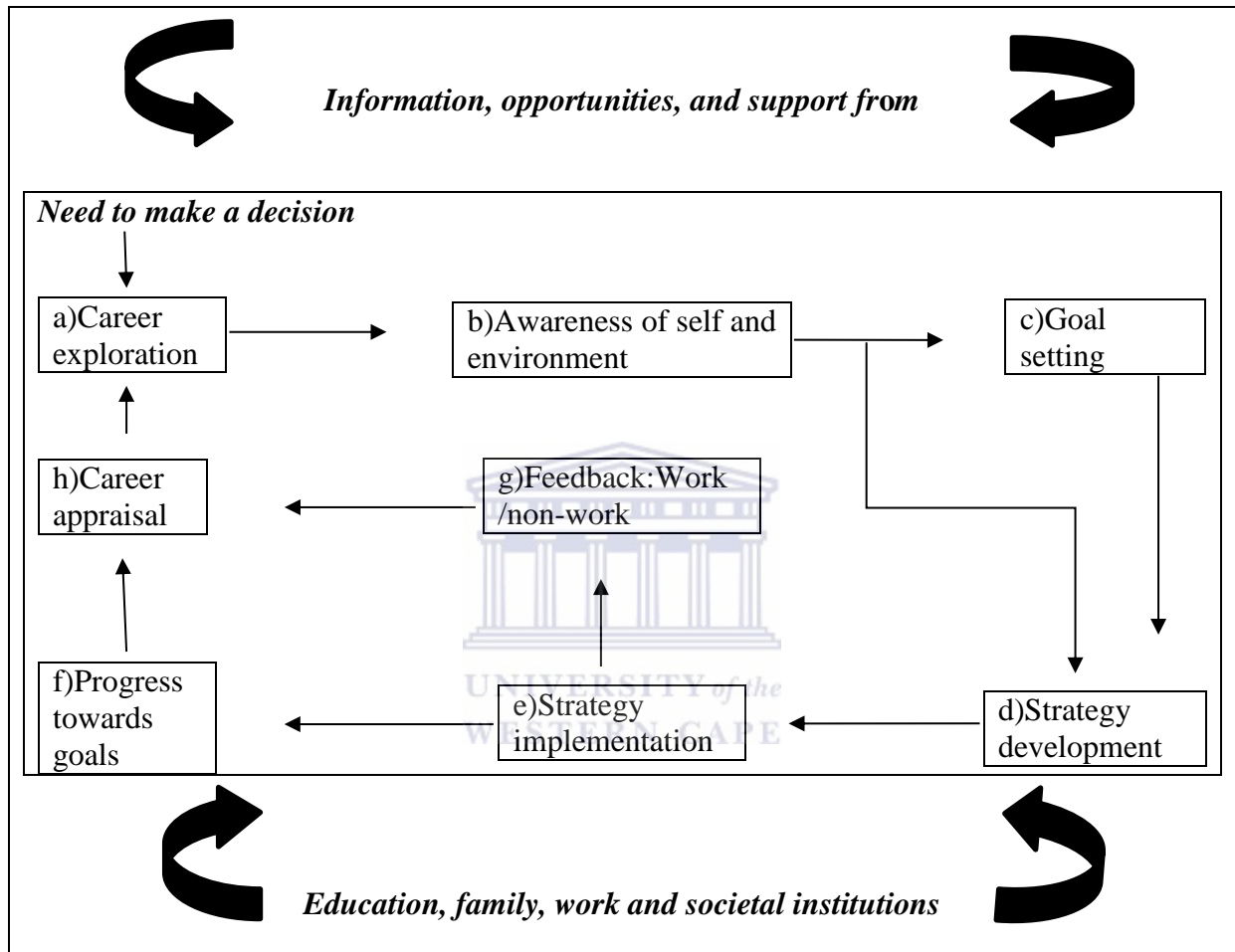


Step 3: Career appraisal

The next step after the development and implementation of a strategy to achieve individual goals is the career appraisal stage. This will give individuals an indication as to their progress towards the goals they have set as well as the strategies they have implemented (Schreuder & Theron, 2004). It is essential that individuals monitor their performance and evaluate their own progress toward the set goals, establish what the development areas are, and decide whether plans need to be revisited (Greenhouse et al., 2000). Holistically, at this stage the individual must be able to receive feedback from colleagues and managers as well as friends and family. It will also enable individuals to do career appraisal – a reflective and re-evaluative process – which can assist in further career exploration, reexamination of their

career goals, and career management cycles (Greenhouse et al., 2000; Schreuder & Theron, 2004).

Figure 2.11. Model of career management



Greenhouse, J. H., Callanan, G. A., & Godshalk, V. M. (2000). *Career Management* (3rd ed.).

Mason, Ohio: Thomson South-Western.

2.14. Organisational career support activities

2.14.1. Career counselling

In order to be successful, career planning and career counselling should go hand in hand as both can maximise the effectiveness of career development and management activities (Rothwell et al., 2005). In many organisations career counselling may be treated as an informal process which constitutes general discussions between a representative (manager, supervisor and HR) and an employee, but it can also include discussions with specialised professionals (counsellors). However, employees can also, in their own personal capacity, seek external counsellors or can be referred by the organisation (Iles & Mabey, 1993). Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) state that when internal or external counsellors are to intervene or assist they should be sensitive to cultural diversity and therefore counselling should include different variables and processes in order to be effective, especially in a labour force that is culturally representative such as in the South African labour market. Counsellors should be able to challenge perceptions that certain career opportunities are only for certain demographical groups (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005).

It seems, though, that supervisors in most organisations are recognised as key individuals in providing career counselling; however, they may not always be trained in counselling and feedback skills (Iles & Mabey, 1993). These managers or supervisors may also resent the extra burden over and above their normal work requirements and functions, and see no reward in doing career counselling (Iles & Mabey, 1993). Iles and Mabey (1993) identify several solutions to these obstacles. Supervisors should be given the appropriate training and relevant information pertaining to career paths and opportunities within the organisation, and not just within their own area or work. Supervisors and managers should be rewarded for their career development efforts, for example, performing employee evaluations, and their

success in these endeavours should be included in the appraisal and compensation systems of the organisation. It was found that the best employers link managers' remuneration or compensation to how they manage talent and develop employees. The results showed that 65 % of Asia's best employers have reported that their managers' bonuses are linked to the development of high-performing employees (Looi, Marusz & Baumruk, 2004).

Gianokos (1999) argues that it is unlikely that individuals with more stable career choice patterns would seek career counselling for indecisiveness as they have a higher level of confidence in their career decision-making skills, and may have access to mentors. The author suggests that counsellors should rather assess these individuals' career choices from a developmental perspective as their initial career choices may be unsustainable due to changes in the workforce. Individuals may benefit from more practical career assistance in learning about other careers which may be congruent with their own self-assessed interests, values, and abilities (Gianokos, 1999). Similarly, for those who have a wealth of life experiences and wish to embark on a second career path would significantly benefit from counselling which is self-directed and pragmatic and which may address unforeseen difficulties that might be experienced when making the transition into multiple work and family responsibilities (Gianokos, 1999). De Bruin (2001) states that the changing social and technological environment should also be recognised in career counselling as it does influence how work and careers are structured and perceived. Future employees are expected to be flexible and multi-skilled, and career counselling assessments can assist in identifying individual work-related strengths, skills and abilities which can be applied in various contexts (De Bruin, 2001).

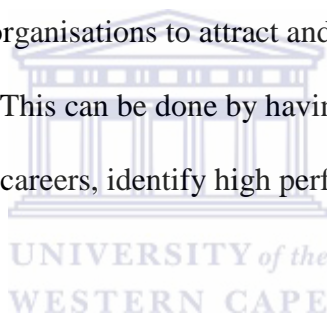
2.14.2. Training

In order for an organisation to have a competitive edge over its competitors, it is imperative that it has, and is able to manage and sustain, an efficient and effective workforce. However, this is largely dependent on how fast the organisation can upgrade its skills, and how it can utilise its newly acquired knowledge (Wilkinson et al., 1994). One of the primary functions of training and development is to enable employees to improve their productivity; therefore, career management is vital to retain these productive individuals within the organisation. This can only be achieved if sufficient opportunities and promotional possibilities exist within the organisation (Nel et al., 2002).

As mentioned earlier, literature has shown the importance of the person-organisation fit and along with environmental variables such as reputation, size and opportunities available in organisation and how these influence an individual's choice to ultimately work for a particular organisation. Linked to the person-organisation fit is a more current trend according to which an organisation strives towards being viewed as an employer of choice by the best talent available. Looi et al. (2004) state that in order to become the best employer an organisation needs to focus on growing talent within its own ranks. A study they embarked on found that 73% of employees in such companies felt that they had more training- and career-development opportunities as opposed to employees in other organisations. The authors state that organisations should demonstrate a sincere and dedicated commitment to training and development. They should provide more training channels and programmes such as mentoring and coaching, libraries, e-platforms and classroom training. They further suggest that more employees should become involved in various assignments or job-rotation as part of their development programmes, instead of just traditional interval and classroom

training. The implementation of one-on-one mentoring and training which is centered around technical skills and leadership as well as culture could be effective (Looi et al., 2004).

The organisation's training and development policy can be linked to managers' general attitudes and perceptions of attaining organisational goals through human resources. These attitudes and perceptions could also illustrate management's role in investing in training and development (Nel et al., 2002). From both a strategic and an operational perspective, the policy should reflect why it is important for the organisation to invest in its employees, and it should be a combination of management skills, job content and leadership training which should be aligned to the various career levels in the organisation (Nel et al., 2002). Looi et al. (2004) argue that in order for organisations to attract and retain the best performers they should establish a talent pipeline. This can be done by having programmes in place where employees can manage their own careers, identify high performers, and provide them with accelerated learning programmes.



Various studies have found that the effects of the availability and quality of training have a direct influence on careers, specifically career choices. Iles and Mabey (1993) agree that the implementation of career preferences can be used in an organisation's placement and promotion system (Iles & Mabey, 1993). For organisational development programmes such as job assignments and training courses to be effective, they need to be implemented vigorously. Studies examining the choices of medical residents (Davenport, Henderson, Hogan, Mentzer & Zwischenberger, 2008; Ko, Escarce, Baker, Sharp & Guarino, 2005) found that the quality of training (teaching skills and opportunities to learn clinical skills) was a significant factor which affected resident's choice of specialty, training location and job

location. Enari and Hashimoto (2013) also found that monetary incentives and training environments are factors which influence a resident's choice.

2.14.3. Mentoring and career coaching

Mentoring and coaching are generally confusing as both are used as developmental tools but follow different processes. Coaching is aimed at on-the-job performance and can be related to on-the-job training while mentoring focuses more on the overall growth of the individual (Rothwell et al., 2005). According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2006), mentoring has proven to be very effective in transferring unambiguous and relevant knowledge within an organisation. Mentoring focuses on enhancing and advancing the development of people in the workplace, and it centres round how effective people think and make decisions and deal with complex situations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). It fosters an informal relationship between an experienced individual (mentor) and an inexperienced individual (mentee) (Iles & Mabey, 1993; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). It can also breach the gap between requirements for current work performance and future competencies required. For instance, it could be a tool in succession planning when an individual may be mentored in order to develop skills which will be required for future advancement (Rothwell et al., 2005).

The mentoring relationship should be promoted actively within the organisation as it could enhance an individual's career success and personal growth and viability in the organisation (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). It can also assist in the development of new professional contacts, enhance the organisation's reputation, motivate employees, increase organisational communication channels, give exposure to new ideas and technologies, and broaden perspectives (Rothwell et al., 2005). The transfer of organisational culture is also a

possibility and can assist in succession planning and leadership training (Iles & Mabey, 1993).

The organisation should provide coaching, internally or externally, and it should identify those key development areas required for employees' professional growth. It should provide guidance in setting realistic goals and communicate the direction, needs and expectations of the organisation (Rothwell et al., 2005). In addition, the coaching function should provide information about career development opportunities and resources (Rothwell et al., 2005).

The essence of mentoring and coaching relationships is built on trust and a common purpose in developing a two-sided learning relationship. Within the mentoring process the mentor offers ongoing support and development opportunities for the mentee, and also offers guidance, counselling and realistic and objective assistance (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

There is usually a distinction between formal and informal mentoring programmes; whilst informal mentoring involves forming spontaneous relationship, formal mentoring is arranged and overseen by an employer. Mentoring can therefore take place within an organisation, in a university or school or other external entities (Rothwell et al., 2005; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006).

In evaluating mentoring as a tool to assist in career choices and developmental activities, the studies of Allan, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004) and Hetty van Emmerik (2004) found that mentorship can be effective as it allows for a networking developmental strategy to be established which can also be positively related to career success; therefore, individuals who have similar characteristics as their mentors or supervisors are more likely to invest in developmental relationships and get social support when needed to assist them in achieving their career choices and advance to higher levels. A study conducted in the United States

about the developmental programme showed that employees who actively engage in career planning and development activities such as mentorship programmes and feedback derive greater benefit from mentors assigned to them (Noe, 1988).

2.14.4. Assessment and career-development centres

An organisation's career assessment and development centre, either internally or externally, can be of great help to an individual. Besides making booklets and pamphlets available to employees, career development centres can play a more integrated and holistic role in career development, career guidance and career management and, ultimately, also career choices.

According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2006), by establishing a career development centre the organisation can communicate effectively at all levels and assist individuals to take charge of their own careers and foster ownership of career choices, career development and career management.



Furthermore, online services can provide career and employment-related information such as the following:

- Information about employment trends and job opportunities.
- Details of competencies and skills required for the jobs which employees may wish to apply for.
- Self-assessment tools such as culture-free personality tests and interest indicators which may assist employees to determine which jobs or career paths may best suit them.
- Make links available to online employment resources such as job listing and career development information.

- Online employment counselling which may also include advice on interviews, job applications, CV and resumé tools, career-related articles, etc.

(Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006)

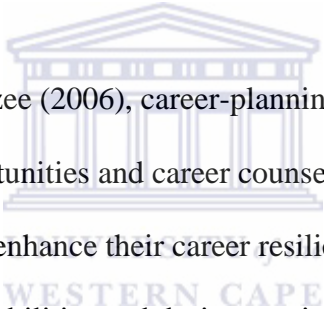
An assessment centre is not a place but a structured combination of assessment techniques which is used to provide a holistic assessment of every participant (Garavan & Morley, 1997). It can be used for career development purposes, and could be useful for making decisions regarding promotions and evaluations and for training individuals with managerial potential by exposing such individuals to simulated exercises and situations which reflect real-life managerial situations (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). In a study undertaken in Mumbai by Bakshi et al. (2012) who examined these influences on career choices, it was found that the majority of youths who participated in the study rated professional career guidance services as the least influential. These students made use of assessment centres on a limited scale. Conversely, students who had made use of these services in the past found assessment centres to be an important influencing factor in assisting with career choice. Bakshi et al. (2012) concluded that there is an urgent need to address the relevance, access, quality and cultural significance of professional career guidance services.

2.14.5. Career-planning workshops

Career-planning workshops offered by organisations or professionals can also form part of developmental activities (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). These workshops can be particularly helpful as some individuals may not know which direction to follow when choosing a career, and subsequently end up choosing career paths in an arbitrary way hoping that these may lead to positive outcomes (Rothwell et al., 2005). Individuals who participate and are actively

involved in these workshops obtain self-knowledge, are introduced to work opportunities within the organisation, sector or industry, and also develop their own career plans.

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006) state that in career planning workshops individuals will discuss and identify their individual strengths and development areas; they are given feedback about the behaviour of fellow participants; they participate in self-assessment exercises; and also decide on plans relating to future career moves. Although motivated, participants in these workshops are cautious when setting their own career goals; if the goals and plans are not integrated into the organisation's career management system, the value of their career goals may be limited (Iles & Mabey, 1993).



According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2006), career-planning workshops combine self-assessments, organisational opportunities and career counselling. They can improve the employability of participants and enhance their career resilience. Individuals will be able to assess and evaluate whether their abilities and desires are in line with the organisation's mission, corporate goals, strategies and policies. They will evaluate their own ethics and professional intentions in comparison to the approach of the organisation (Rothwell et al., 2005).

2.15. Conclusion

The three main variables, namely individual, situational and environmental may all play a decisive role in an individual's ultimate career choice. Individual and situational factors can be described as internal factors as they deal with an individuals' immediate environment and interaction such as their own interests, talents, family influences, education, and socio-cultural factors. Environmental factors which are more external such as the availability of

jobs within that career field and remuneration and opportunities presented within that specific career, may also influence an individual to pursue a particular field. Although these are the main variables discussed through the research conducted, it has been found that these internal and external factors may not always be the only factors which influence a particular career choice.

It is common that through the process of choosing a career individuals may also experience career indecision and they are unable to make an informed choice about a career. There are many explanations as to why an individual may not be able to make a career choice, some of which are a lack of career planning or insufficient information, or they simply may not be ready to make a career decision. They may not have researched or gathered enough information about the particular career they wish to enter, or did not take into account how it will match their own interests, talents and skills. During this period individuals may also experience considerable anxiety and may start to question their self-concept and identity. This can lead to their making an inappropriate career choice, or not making a decision at all. Literature emphasises the need for effective career planning throughout the career decision-making process, and especially the importance of exploration.

When we turn our attention to the organisation's role in the modern work environment, it is evident that career development is no longer just an individual effort. Organisations have increasingly come to realise the importance of the role that they play in an individual's career. It is after all incumbent upon the organisation to present the individual with promotional opportunities, training, recognition and financial rewards. Many organisations include these factors in their talent attraction and retention strategies. An organisation's career-development activities such as career management, training, workshops and career

counselling, and the establishment of career and assessment centres may assist an individual to choose a career, explore a new career path, or even assist others in setting and working towards their career goals. In the modern workplace career goals and career success can be closely linked, and it is therefore important that individuals guard against setting unattainable goals that may not be in line with those required by the organisation.

In this study, the focus was specifically on the motor industry, and the researcher firstly examined the economics and external environment in which it functions. Due to the turbulence in the industry over the past few decades, it has become highly susceptible to external influences such as economic markets, trade and political environments. In fact, it is evident that instability in any one of those spheres at any time in past has had a considerable impact on the industry. Although economics speak largely to the manufacturing motor industry, it is clear that it can have a chain-reaction effect on the retail industry as well. The researcher is confident that literature pertaining to the motor industry has provided a valuable background for examining Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape).

The literature studied covers a wide variety of topics, themes and theories in regards to career choices and career decision-making processes in an organisational context. This study not only explored the career choice topic but provided a solid basis for the chapters to follow, namely the research methodology, data results, and the discussion and recommendations.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The literature covered has illustrated that there are various individual, situational and environmental variables that may influence an individual's career choice. In this section, there will be a broader explanation of the research objectives, hypotheses and rationale pertaining to the study. There will also be an examination of the research methodology, data-collection method, data-analysis technique, strengths and limitations as well as the ethical considerations which the researcher had to abide by.

3.2. Research objectives

- To identify which factors influence career choices.
- To identify whether individual, situational and environmental variables influence career choice.
- To assess the perception of organisational career support systems with regards to career development and management, including exposure, management support and career support activities.



3.3. Rationale for the study

Two realities have to be taken into account when examining career choices. Firstly, there are various factors that may play a role when an individual makes a career choice. There is an ongoing emphasise that career choice and decision making is an ongoing and life long process (Amundson, 2006). There is a shift in focus towards career guidance, in that regards that the functions and activities are stretched in several different directions (Amundson, 2006). If this approach is taken then these activities need to build upon one another and

should be applied over the individual's life span (Amundson, 2006). Therefore, the career process is not static, short term or rigid and therefore career choice or development is often an ongoing process throughout an individual's years in the workplace. Secondly, the current workplace is ever-changing as are careers, organisations and employees which all play a crucial role in career decision making. An individual's career is no longer centred around finding and remaining in a specific job for any length of time, but today it is all about making frequent career choices in a rapidly changing environment (Kannan, 2007). Whether or not these tasks relate to deciding on a career path, training or skills development, work assignment or even opportunities for mobility, they are all centred around the question of what resources employees have available in order to make appropriate career-related decisions. Many researchers (Ballout, 2007; Cable & Judge, 1994; Dick et al., 2001; Myburgh, 2005) have also shown that some of these factors which influence career choices are not only decisive when deciding on a career choice, but they also affect an individual's preference for an organisation, where to start a career or whether to stay in an organisation. These two realities serve as a basis for this study, and as highlighted earlier in the literature, many studies have been conducted on career choice in other fields such as accountancy, medicine and science. However, the motor retail industry has not attracted a comparable amount of research on the subject of career choice. The industry is also facing challenges in regards to skills shortages as well as retaining and attracting individuals with the right skills sets. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate information gleaned from employees and to examine various individual, situational and environmental variables which have influenced their career choices. The investigation will also look at what individuals' perceptions of organisational support systems are, and whether these systems are helpful making career-related decisions.

3.4. Hypotheses

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between individual variables (talent, skills and abilities and personal interests) and career choice amongst individuals.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between situational variables (parents or relatives' advice, friend or peers' influence, school teacher/lecturer's influence, association with others in the field, academic performance, culture, religion, role models and socio-economic background) and career choice amongst individuals.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between environmental variables (work experience within the field and business opportunities) and career choice amongst individuals.

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between perceived benefits (career flexibility, prestige, lifestyle and social status, challenging and interesting career, possibility of becoming a CEO or director of a company, availability of employment, employment security, initial earning potential, future earning potential, promotional prospects, personal growth and development, potential to travel, self-employment, size of the organisation, on-the-job training and specialization, opportunity to use skills and abilities) and career choice.

H5: There is a statistically significant relationship between exposure to organisational career support activities and career development.

H6: There is a statistically significant relationship between utilisation of organisational career support activities and career development.

H7: There is a statistically significant relationship between management's support and career development.

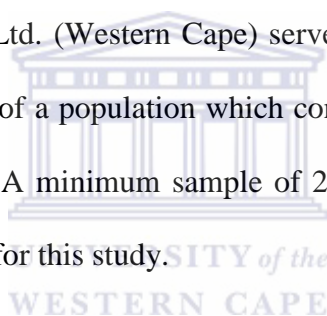
H8: There is a statistically significant relationship between an individual's gender and career choice.

H.9: There is a statistically significant relationship between an individual's educational level and career choice.

H10: There is a statistically significant relationship between discrimination (gender, age, religion, culture or race) and career choice amongst individuals.

3.5. Research methodology

A population can be defined as an entire group of people, events and the like which the researcher aims to examine (Sekaran, 2001). A population can also be defined as any group that shares a set of common traits, for example, all BMW drivers, all science teachers in South Africa, etc. (Black, 2003). The 769 full-time employees currently working for Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape) served as the population in this study. A sample is defined as a section of a population which consists of individuals selected from that population (Sekaran, 2001). A minimum sample of 245 employees of Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. was selected for this study.



The study therefore made use of a non-probability sampling procedure which fits into the category of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is defined by Sekaran (2001) as the process of collecting information from members of the population who are conveniently available at a particular time. Sekaran (2001) further states that the benefits of convenient sampling are that it is quick, convenient and inexpensive; however, it lacks generalisability.

A pilot study was conducted and a questionnaire was initially distributed to 20 individuals working for Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape). This was done in order to determine the content validity of the questionnaire being used in this study.

3.6. Method of data collection

In this study a questionnaire was used to obtain information from participants; 330 questionnaires were distributed to employees working at Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape). However, only 247 were returned and 24 questionnaires were incomplete, reducing the sample to 223. Because of the wide geographical distribution of the various dealerships, some of the questionnaires were electronically distributed whilst others were administered either in groups or individually. The questionnaire first and foremost requested the respondents to provide their biographical data relating to their gender, age, department, and their highest level of education.

As identified in the literature review, the questionnaire was constructed around individual, situational and environmental factors that could possibly influence the career choices of individuals. All the individual, situational and environmental variables that have been discussed in the literature have been included in the questionnaire except personality. As highlighted in the previous section, research studies (Roberts et al., 2003; Wang, Jome, Haase & Bruch, 2006) clearly have emphasized the importance of personality in influencing career choice, this is not disputed in the study, however in order to incorporate personality into the current study would require an extra tool to measure individual personalities. Due to costs and resources available, this was not feasible. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. Section A covered the biographical information of the participants and section B the questions pertaining to factors influencing career choice and perceptions of organisational career support.

The respondents were requested to rate the factors which impacted their career choice in accordance with the five-point Likert scale, namely factors which had the strongest influence to those that had no influence; statements that they strongly agreed with to strongly disagreed with; and those that they regarded as the most important to the least important. Content validity and reliability tests were conducted as well. The Cronbach's Alpha was also used to measure internal consistency and to check the reliability of an ordinal scale (Black, 2003). The questionnaire used was adapted from the questionnaire developed by Myburgh (2005) who embarked on a similar study. The questionnaire was used in a pilot study to establish adequate levels of content validity.

3.7. Data analysis technique

3.7.1. Descriptive statistics and graphs

Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, cross tabulations, means and standard deviations were used to summarise the data. Bar graphs were also used to present a graphic view of the frequencies. This was especially convenient in this study as there were more categories, for example, years of experience in the motor retail industry, which had seven categories including the no-answer category.

3.7.2. Chi-square and Fischer's exact test

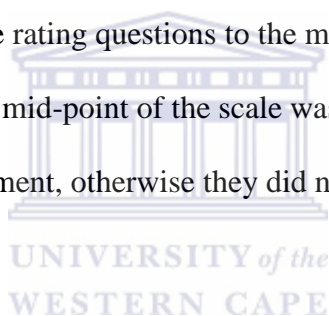
The Chi-square test of association was used to assess whether there was any association between categorical variables. In the application of the Chi-square test, the expected values for each cell should not be less than 5. When the sample size per cell is small it results in expected frequencies of less than 5; therefore, the Fisher's exact test was used. A Fisher's exact test is very useful in analysing contingency tables with both small and large samples. All the Chi-square tests were conducted at 5% significance level.

3.7.3. Cronbach's Alpha

The Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) on rating questions. Internal consistency describes the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct. The value of the Cronbach's Alpha ranges from zero to one, and the closer the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is to 1 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

3.7.4. One-sample t-test

The one-sample t-test is used when a sample mean is being compared to a hypothesised mean when the variable is assumed to be normally distributed. In this research it was used to compare the mean rating of all the rating questions to the mid-point of the Likert scale (3). A value significantly lower than the mid-point of the scale was considered to imply that the respondents agreed with the statement, otherwise they did not agree.



3.8. Ethical issues

- Voluntary participation by respondents was of the utmost importance as they should not have felt forced or coerced to participate in the study. Participants were made aware of the purpose of the study, and were given the assurance that their personal information and responses would remain confidential and that no deception would take place.
- Confidentiality was strongly adhered to, and the interests, information and responses of the participants were protected at all times by the research team and were not made available to anyone else. Furthermore, the information and responses given were only used for the purposes as at the outset presented to the respondent.

- Participants were given the assurance that their participation would be voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. They were made aware of what would be expected of them and what the information they provide would be used for.

To conclude, this section served as background and foundation for this study as well as a guideline for the chapters to follow in order to reach the research objectives as set out in this chapter. Chapter four looks at the information gathered as well as graphical depictions of results that were generated from the sampled population's responses.

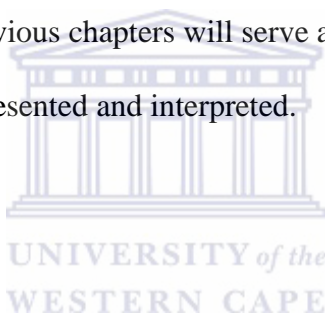


Chapter Four

Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

After data collection and the examination of the questionnaires, the information was coded and quantitatively analysed using the statistical programme for social sciences (SPSS), version 20. This chapter will outline the results from the study. The statistical data in the first instance presents an outline of the basic characteristics of the sample such as gender, age, race, educational level and home language. Thereafter, analyses of the factors that influence career choice and perceptions of organisational career support in the motor retail industry are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted.



4.2. Results

4.2.1. Validation of pilot study

4.2.1.1. Background of the pilot study

The pilot study was conducted and administered at the various dealerships of Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape) situated in the area from the southern suburbs to the Boland in the Western Cape. The validation process of this pilot study made use of the content validity method in accordance with the following (Fitzgerald, 1983):

- (1) Sampling adequacy of test content.
- (2) Sampling adequacy of test responses.
- (3) Relevance of test content to a content universe.
- (4) Relevance of the test responses to a behavioural universe.
- (5) Clarity of content domain definitions.
- (6) Technical quality of test items.

Content validity also determines whether the content covers a representative sample of the particular behaviours that are to be measured and addressed in a study (Woolfaardt, 2001). However, it is a non-statistical type of validation which is regularly used to ensure high validity of content and by making use of a panel of subject matter experts to evaluate the particular items (Woolfaardt, 2001). Durrheim (1999) states that in order to work towards content validity within a study, a researcher should

1. specify the content area that will be covered by the researched phenomenon, especially when developing the construct definition,
2. choose and write items that are relevant to each of the content areas,
3. develop a measure of the particular construct that will include the most representative items.



The pilot study was conducted in September 2013 to establish the content validity of the questionnaire which has been adapted from the study of Myburgh (2005). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A which contained the bibliography and Section B which consisted of eight questions accompanied by tables, each with its own Likert scale. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire and contained information about the purpose of the study, the use of the data to be collected and the confidentiality of the participants; it also contained the contact details of the researcher should any additional information be required. Fifteen of the 20 questionnaires distributed were sent electronically in order to ensure a speedy response and also to eliminate any geographical obstacles. These individuals were from different divisions, departments and job levels. They were apprised of what the pilot study entailed, what the information would be used for, and how this would fit into the rest of the study. They were also asked to communicate any feedback via electronic mail, telephonically or in person if they found anything in the questionnaire which was unclear or

ambiguous. They were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them within three working days, either electronically or by hand delivery. Thirteen of the 20 questionnaires were collected by the end of the second week of September 2013.

The pilot study conducted in September 2013, see Table 1, consisted of 13 participants of whom nine were male and four female. It is important to consider that there will most probably be a significant difference in gender representation in the study, as reflected in the pilot study, due to the industry being very male dominated, and that the company's general employee ratio (Figure 2.1) would show a predominance of males. The racial demographic ratio was represented by six Coloureds, four Africans and three Whites, and their ages ranged between 18 and 41 and older: 18 to 24 years (0), 25 to 29 years (5), 30 to 40 years (3), and 41 and older (5). In the language category the representation was Afrikaans (4), English (5), isiXhosa (3), and isiZulu (1). The level of education was equally distributed: primary school (0), grades 8 to 10 (1), grades 11 to 12 (4), diplomas (5), degrees (0), and postgraduate degrees (3).

Table 1. The outline of the pilot study

Gender	Male	9
	Female	4
Total		13
Race	Coloured	6
	African	4
	White	3
Total		13
Age	18- 24	0
	25- 29	5
	30- 40	3
	41 +	5
Total		13
Language	Afrikaans	4
	English	5
	isiXhosa	3
	isiZulu	1
Total		13
Highest Education Level	Primary School	0
	Grade 8- 10	1
	Grade 11- 12	4
	Diploma	5
	Degree	
	Post grad degree (Honours/Masters/PHD)	3
Total		13

4.2.1.2. Key findings of pilot study

The following became apparent via the feedback from the participants in regards to the questionnaires:

- The researcher was advised to also add “*current job role*” as an alternative choice to question 3 which asked, when did an individual decide on his or her career choice? A considerable number of respondents highlighted that most of the current options in the questionnaire did not allow for their preferred responses:
- One participant did not understand what was meant by “*Employment security*”; however, this was not a problem experienced by the rest of the sample.
- Two candidates did not understand the instructions of completing the full questionnaire. This could be due to their not reading the instructions carefully, although the questionnaire does have an example section of how the questions should be answered.
- The length of the questionnaire seemed to have deterred many of the participants, but upon completion their feedback reflected that it took them about minimum five minutes to complete.
- Across the entire response base a minimum of responses indicated “*unsure*” which implied that most respondents were confident in reflecting their true opinions and experiences in relation to the items being measured.
- Overall, across the chosen sample, the racial, language and education level differences did not seem to have an impact on the diverse group of respondents participating in the study. It is then assumed that there seems to be no obvious bias or discrimination against any group within the sample.
- Section A, the biographical section, should be revised as the last age group should be changed from 40 + to 41+, because the 40+ is already included in the age group 30 to 40.

- Years of service was changed to years of service in the motor industry.
- A change to the groups of years of service in the motor industry: the last group was changed to 21+ years, because 20 years was already included in the group 16 to 20 years of service.
- One of the items in question 1, namely “My own decision” will be removed from the questionnaire as this option is vague and ambiguous and does not give any specific insight into the influential factor(s) when making a career choice.
- One item will be divided into two separated items, namely “*Association with others in the field*” and “*Role models*” as these may not necessarily refer to the same person. There is a definite distinction between knowing someone in the field, and having a role model. A role model may be an individual one may wish to emulate or aspire to, but who may not necessarily be in the same field as the intended career choice. An individual may be inspired by another’s character, values and ethics, in contrast to someone who may simply utilise the skills and knowledge of someone as a point of reference.

The final questionnaire was distributed in October 2013 to the employees of Sandown Motor Holdings (Pty) Ltd. (Western Cape).

4.3. Reliability

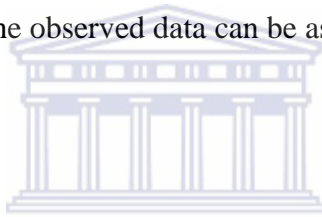
In order to establish the reliability of the instrument a Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated for all the 66 statements that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was 0.866. Thus the scale was very reliable.

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.866	66

4.4. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics calculated for the sample are provided in the next section. The data pertaining to the variables included in the study as collected through the questionnaire are summarised by means of graphic representations and the calculation of descriptive measures. In this manner, the properties of the observed data can be ascertained as an overall picture emerges.



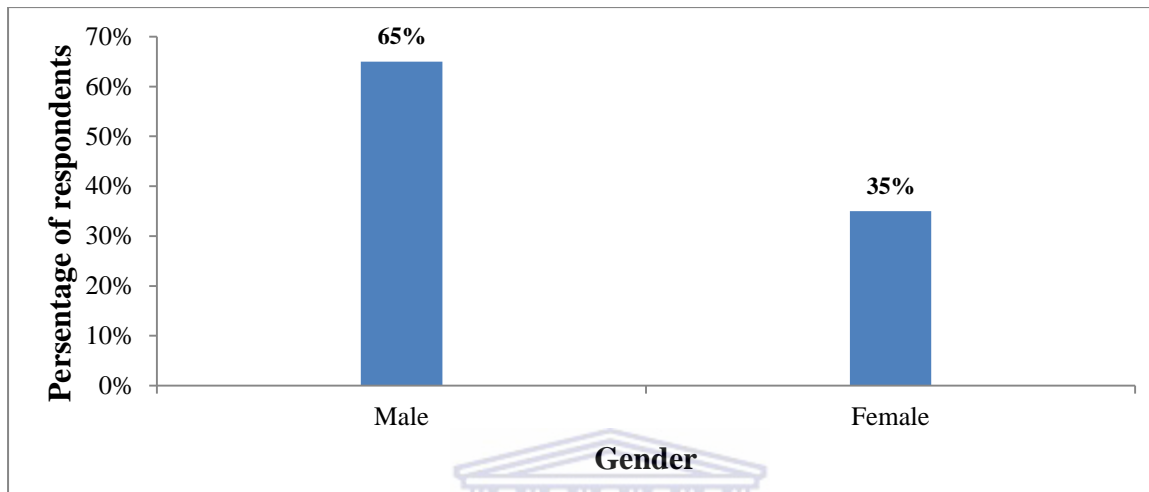
4.4.1. Biographical information of respondents

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the variables included in the biographical questionnaire.

4.4.1.1. Gender

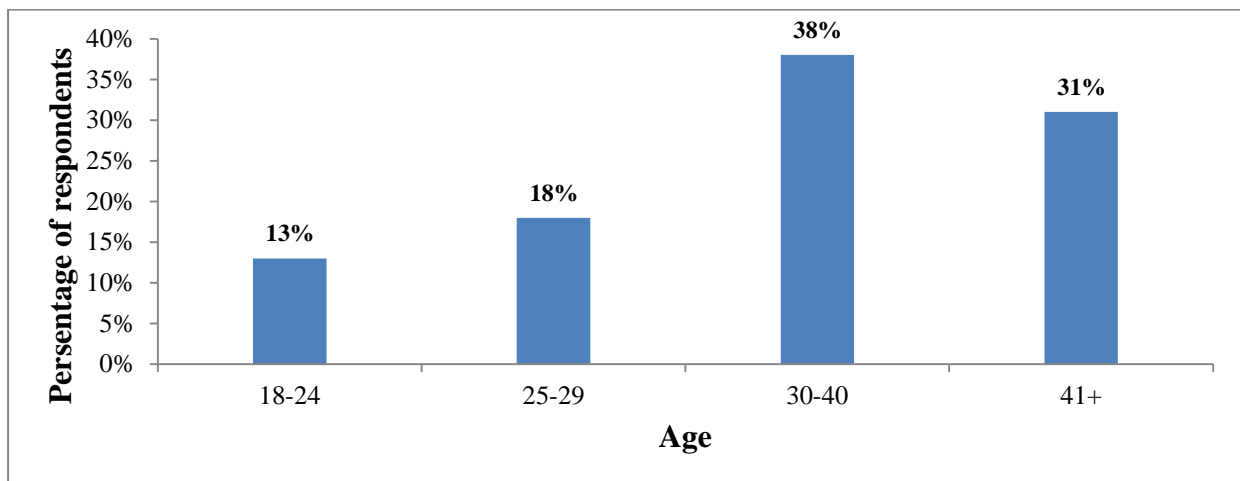
A total of 223 usable questionnaires were completed of which 65% were completed by males and 35% by females.

Figure 4.1. Gender



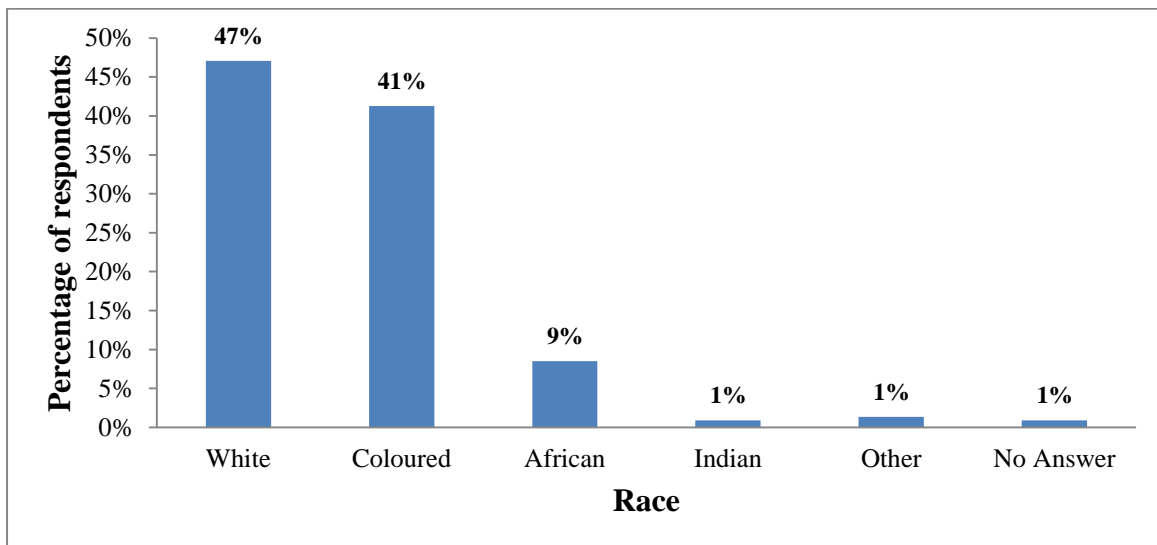
4.4.1.2. Age distribution of the respondents

The sample was made up of 13% in the 18 to 24 years age group, 18% in the 25 to 29 years age group, 38% in the 30 to 40 years age group, and 31% in the age group 41 and older. The results are shown in Figure 4.2.

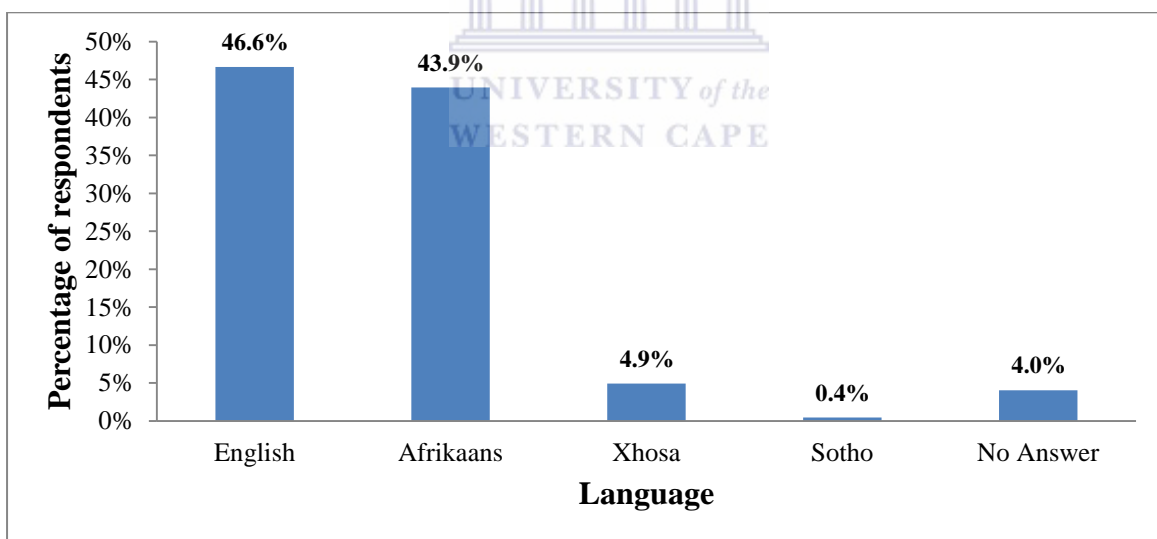
Figure 4.2. Age

4.4.1.3. Race of the respondents

Whites constituted the dominant race in the motor industry sample represented by 47% of the sample, 41% were Coloured, only 9% Black, and 1% Indians. There was another 1% that decided not to answer the question on race. The results are shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3. Race of respondents

4.4.1.4. Home language of the respondents

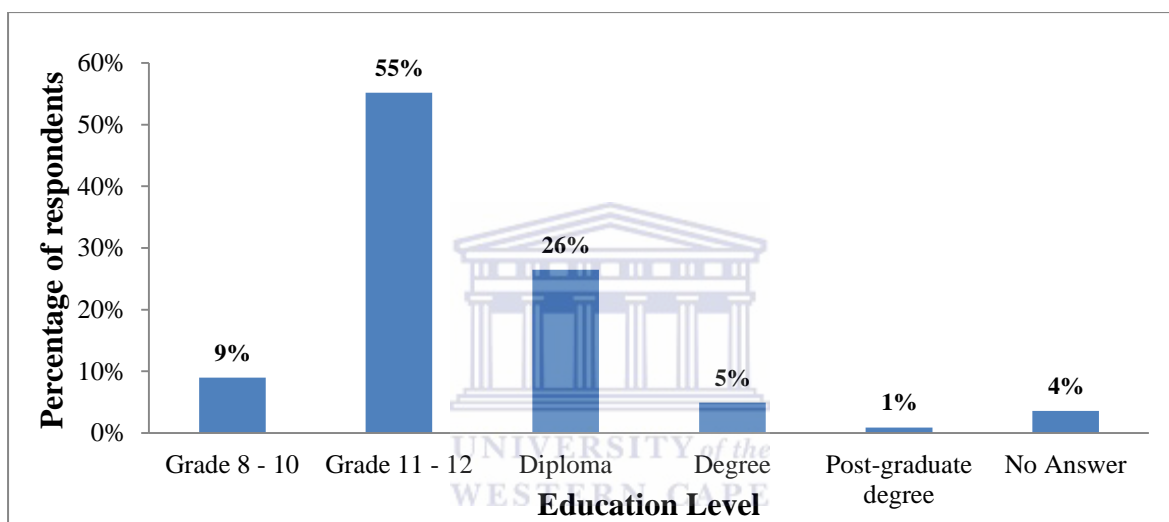
Figure 4.4. Home Language

Close to half of the respondents (46.6%) indicated English as their home language, 43.9% indicated Afrikaans, 4.9% Xhosa, 0.4% Sotho, and the other 4% did not indicate their home language.

4.4.1.5. Educational level of the respondents

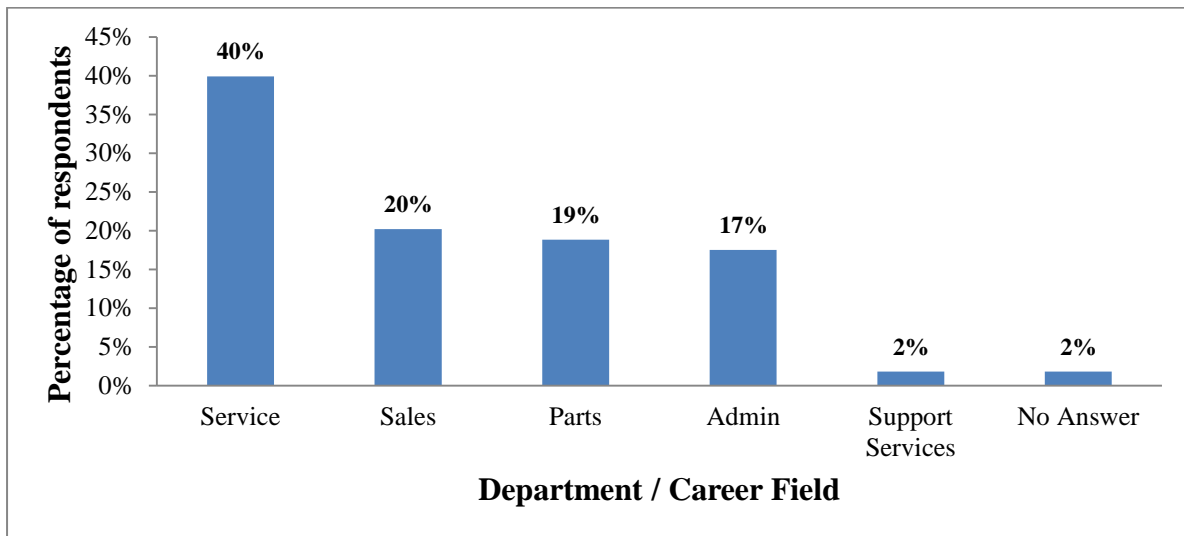
More than half of the respondents indicated their highest level of education as between grade 11 and grade 12 (55%), 9% had between grade 8 and grade 10, 26% had diplomas, 5% had degrees, and the other 1% had postgraduate degrees. The remaining 4% of respondents did not disclose their highest level of education.

Figure 4.5. Highest level of education

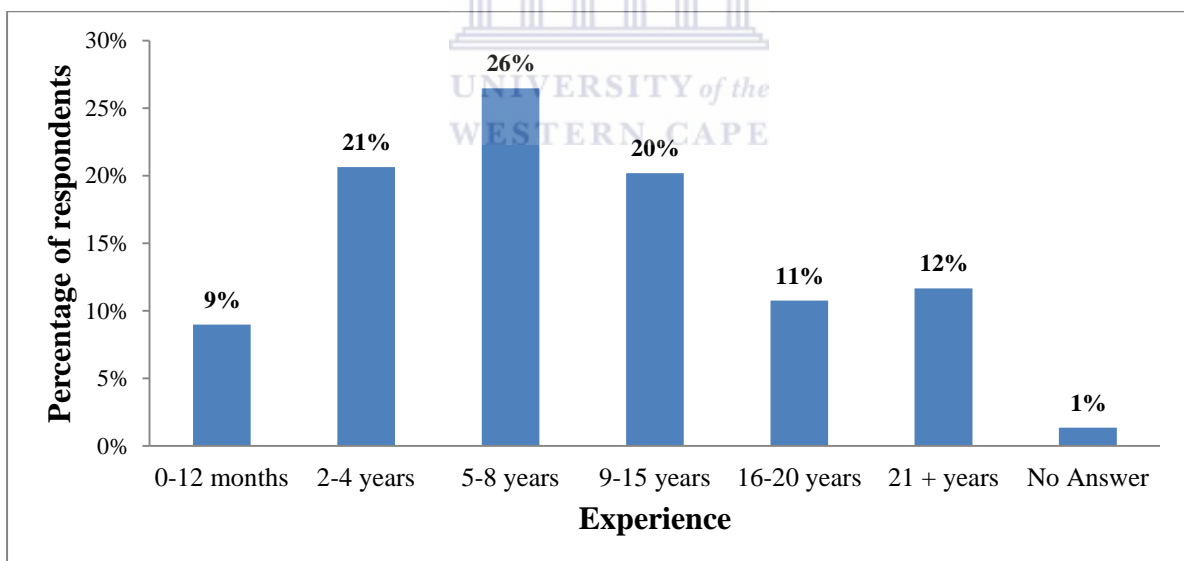


4.4.1.6. Department or career field

Two in every five of the respondents worked in the service department (40%), one in every five in the sales department (20%), and only one in every fifty in the support services (2%). Another 2% decided not to indicate their department or career field. For the purpose of this study, the department or career field will represent the respondent's career choice as the study does not make use of different occupations available in the motor retail industry specifically.

Figure 4.6 Department or career field

4.4.1.7. Years of experience in the motor industry

Figure 4.7. Years of experience in the motor industry

Tenure in the motor retail industry was presented as 26% for those between 5 and 8 years, 21% for those between 2 and 4 years, and only 12% for 21 years and more. The results are shown in Figure 4.7 above.

4.5. Inferential Statistics

In the sections that follow the results of inferential statistics employed in the study are presented. For the purpose of testing the stated research hypotheses, the Chi-square, the Fischer's exact test, and the one-sample t-test were utilised. With the aid of these statistical techniques conclusions were drawn with regards to the population from which the sample was taken, and decisions were made in line with the research hypotheses.

4.5.1. Main sources of influence on career choice

Respondents were asked who or what the main sources of influence or referents were pertaining to their decisions to pursue their chosen career choice, referring to the individual, situational and environmental variables identified in the literature.

A one-sample t-test was conducted against the mid-point of the scale (3). The null hypothesis was equal to 3 and the alternative hypothesis was that the mean is less than 3. This was a one-tailed test and the analysis was conducted at a 5% significance level. The results are indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Main sources of influence

One-sample Statistics	One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Df	P-Value (1-tailed)
Personal Interest	221	1.80	1.047	0.070	-17.023	220	0.000
Talent , Skills and Abilities	221	2.08	1.211	0.081	-11.278	220	0.000
Business opportunities	223	2.52	1.294	0.087	-5.589	222	0.000
Work experience in the field	220	2.58	1.426	0.096	-4.349	219	0.000
Association with others in the field	222	2.61	1.270	0.085	-4.543	221	0.000
Parents' or relatives' advice	223	2.69	1.452	0.097	-3.228	222	0.001
Academic performance at school	220	3.10	1.368	0.092	1.084	219	0.860
Research and Information on career field	221	3.19	1.305	0.088	2.217	220	0.986
Friends or peers' influence	223	3.31	1.266	0.085	3.651	222	1.000
A role model	221	3.35	1.556	0.105	3.373	220	1.000
Socio and Economic Background	223	3.38	1.366	0.091	4.117	222	1.000
Culture	222	3.59	1.391	0.093	6.271	221	1.000
School teacher/ lecturer's influence	219	3.72	1.286	0.087	8.251	218	1.000
Religion	222	3.84	1.448	0.097	8.667	221	1.000

The results indicate that *personal interest* (mean = 1.80) was the highest-rated influence, followed by *talent, skills and abilities* (mean = 2.08), and then *business opportunities* (mean = 2.52). The least-rated influence was religion (3.84). The results for the one sample t-test indicate that the highest factors were individual variables such as personal interest (mean = 1.80, p-value = 0.00) and by talent, skills and abilities (mean = 2.08, p-value = 0.000). Followed by environmental variables, namely, business opportunities (mean = 2.52, p-value = 0.000), work experience in the field (mean = 2.58, p-value = 0.000). Situational variables such as, association with others in the field (mean = 2.61, p-value = 0.000), and parents' or relatives' advice (mean = 2.69, p-value = 0.001) were also deemed as significant in influencing decisions to pursue a certain career choice. This is because the p-values were less than 0.05. Therefore, the three alternative hypotheses are partially accepted, namely that

some individual variables, situational variables and environmental variables do influence an individual's career choice.

Other situational variables such as academic performance at school, friends' or peers' influence, a role model, socio and economic background, culture, school teacher and lecturer influence, and religion did not influence decisions in a statistically significant manner to pursue certain career choices since the p-values were greater than 0.05.

4.5.2. Importance of the benefits that influence career choice

Different, possible benefits that might have influenced respondents to choose their careers were rated on a 5-point scale where 1 was extremely important and 5 was not important at all. These benefits, which have been discussed earlier in the literature, are related to individual, situational and environmental variables that may influence an individual's career choice. The results indicate that "*employment security*" (mean = 1.73) was the highest-rated benefit, followed by "*potential for personal growth and development*" (mean = 1.80) and "*opportunity to use skills and abilities*" (mean = 1.80).

A one-sample t-test was conducted against the mid-point of the scale (3). A one-sample t-test was also conducted with the null hypothesis that the mean is 3, and the alternative hypothesis that the mean is less than 3 of which each benefit had an influence on the decision to pursue a certain career. This was a one-tailed test and the analysis was conducted at 5% significance level. The results are shown below in Table 4.

Table 4. Benefits influencing career choice

One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Employment security	223	1.73	0.881	0.059	-21.587	222	0.000
Potential for personal growth and development	222	1.80	0.906	0.061	-19.712	221	0.000
Opportunity to use skills and abilities	222	1.80	0.940	0.063	-18.992	221	0.000
Availability of employment	222	1.85	0.903	0.061	-18.959	221	0.000
Future high earnings potential	221	1.90	0.974	0.066	-16.855	220	0.000
Having a challenging, and exciting career	221	1.94	0.951	0.064	-16.616	220	0.000
Prospects of on- the -job training	223	1.94	1.042	0.070	-15.228	222	0.000
Promotion prospects	223	1.94	1.018	0.068	-15.518	222	0.000
Career flexibility	218	2.08	0.927	0.063	-14.611	217	0.000
Size and reputation of organisation industry	221	2.09	1.047	0.070	-12.973	220	0.000
Ability to choose career specialization	222	2.09	0.973	0.065	-13.872	221	0.000
Initial earning potential	220	2.13	0.976	0.066	-13.269	219	0.000
Prestige, lifestyle and social status	221	2.76	1.095	0.074	-3.195	220	0.001
Possible of becoming director or CEO	223	2.85	1.385	0.093	-1.595	222	0.056
Self –employment	221	2.92	1.389	0.093	-0.872	220	0.192
Potential to travel	219	3.02	1.206	0.081	0.280	218	0.610

The results for the one-sample t-test indicate that amongst the benefits listed, potential to travel (mean = 3.02, p-value = 0.610), self-employment (mean = 2.92, p-value = 0.192), and possibility of becoming director or CEO (mean = 2.85, p-value = 0.056), were not significant benefits in influencing the career choice of respondents. This is because the p-values were greater than 0.05. The highest-rated variables that were perceived as benefits influencing respondents to enter a career were, employment security (mean = 1.73, p-value = 0.000), potential for personal growth and development (mean = 1.80, p-value = 0.000), availability of employment (mean = 1.85, p-value = 0.000) and opportunity to use skills and abilities

(mean= 1.80, p-value = 0.000). Thus the hypothesis is partially accepted that some benefits do influence an individual's career choice.

4.5.3. When career decisions were made

Respondents were asked when they made their career choices. Most of the respondents indicated that they made their career choices while they were already in their current jobs (mean = 2.53), followed by after school (mean = 2.72) and then when starting their first job (mean = 2.72). As expected, choosing a career while still in primary school (mean = 3.93) was the least-rated time. One-sample t-test results are shown in table below:

Table 5. Time career choice made

	One-Sample Statistics				One sample t-test against the midpoint of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	df	P-Value (1 tailed)
In my current role	214	2.53	1.376	.094	-4.968	213	0.000
After school	218	2.72	1.434	.097	-2.882	217	0.002
When starting your first job	215	2.82	1.453	.099	-1.830	214	0.034
During Grade 12	211	3.35	1.431	.098	3.513	210	1.000
During Grade 8-11	215	3.49	1.384	.094	5.175	214	1.000
Registering for first year	208	3.78	1.289	.089	8.716	207	1.000
During primary school	215	3.93	1.172	.080	11.638	214	1.000

Results showed that the respondents agreed with the following time periods when they decided on a career choice: “*In my current role*” (mean = 2.53, p-value = 0.000), “*After school*” (mean = 2.72, p-value = 0.002), and “*When starting your first job*” (mean = 2.82, p-value = 0.034). These were highlighted as significant and that is because the p-values were less than 0.05.

4.5.4. Perceived discrimination in career field

Whether or not the respondents perceived any discrimination relating to age, race, gender, culture, religion, and internal politics in their chosen career fields was also established. The respondents' perceptions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 was strongly agreed, and 5 was strongly disagree. The results indicate that respondents mainly disagreed with all the forms of discrimination experienced in their chosen career fields. The null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that the respondents are of the view that there is no discrimination in their chosen career choices.

Table 6. Perception on discrimination in chosen career choice

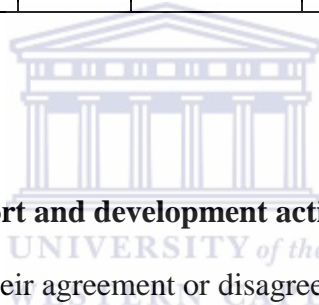
One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Internal politics	222	3.04	1.423	0.096	0.377	221	0.647
Race	221	3.33	1.386	0.093	3.542	220	1.000
Age	220	3.45	1.250	0.084	5.285	219	1.000
Gender	221	3.52	1.260	0.085	6.140	220	1.000
Cultural	221	3.73	1.158	0.078	9.407	220	1.000
Religion	221	3.96	1.013	0.068	14.146	220	1.000

4.5.5. Exposure to organisational career support activities

The respondents indicated that their organisation had exposed them to career support activities for career development purposes. This is because the p-value for the respondents who agreed that they were exposed to support or development activities had a p-value of 0.000 and a mean of 2.33. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted that career support activities exposure does influence an individual's career development.

Table 7. Exposure to career support and development activities

One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Yes, I have been exposed	223	2.33	1.203	0.081	-8.352	222	0.000
No, I have not been exposed	220	3.68	1.267	0.085	7.980	219	1.000
Career support activities are ineffective	219	3.68	1.128	0.076	8.988	218	1.000
I am aware of support activities but have no interest	220	3.70	1.276	0.086	8.084	219	1.000
I have no idea of career support activities	219	3.75	1.257	0.085	8.867	218	1.000



4.5.6. Utilisation of career support and development activities in the organisation

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with having received or utilised career support and development activities in their organisation or externally on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 was strongly agree and 5 was strongly disagree. A one-sample t-test was also conducted with the null hypothesis that the mean is 3 and the alternative hypothesis that the mean is less than 3. The results are shown below in Table 8.

Table 8. Career support activities received or utilised in organisation or externally for career development or management.

One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Training	223	1.94	1.132	0.076	-13.967	222	0.000
Mentoring	221	2.71	1.303	0.088	-3.304	220	0.001
Personal Development Plan	220	3.08	1.306	0.088	0.877	219	0.809
Career Assessment	221	3.10	1.244	0.084	1.243	220	0.892
Career Management	220	3.24	1.275	0.086	2.802	219	0.997
Career coaching	222	3.31	1.236	0.083	3.747	221	1.000
Career Planning	221	3.33	1.223	0.082	4.069	220	1.000
Career Guidance	219	3.38	1.207	0.082	4.701	218	1.000

The results reveal that the respondents agreed significantly to having utilised training (mean = 1.94, p-value = 0.000) and mentoring (mean = 2.71, p-value = 0.001). However, they disagreed to having utilised the following structures since the p-values were greater than 0.05:

- Personal development plan.
- Career assessment.
- Career management.
- Career coaching.
- Career planning.
- Career guidance.

4.5.7. Management support for career development

The respondents indicated that their managers and supervisors supported their career development or career management activities. This is because the p-value is 0.000 and the mean 2.42. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted that management support does influence career development.

Table 9. Managers and supervisors support career development

One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Yes, my manager is very supportive	223	2.42	1.277	.086	-6.815	222	.000
I have not discussed career management with my manager	223	3.26	1.282	.086	3.029	222	.999
No, my manager is not very supportive	223	3.52	1.230	.082	6.263	222	1.000

4.5.8. Career objectives (goals)

Respondents rated their ultimate goals on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 was strongly agree and 5 was strongly disagree. The results of the one-sample t-test where the null hypothesis that the mean is 3, and the alternative hypothesis that the mean is less than 3 (or respondents agree with the goal) are shown below in Table 10.

Table 10. Ultimate career goals

One-Sample Statistics					One sample t-test against the mid-point of the scale = 3		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	P-Value (1 tailed)
Becoming an expert	223	1.40	0.669	0.045	-35.713	222	0.000
Being successful	221	1.43	0.633	0.043	-37.009	220	0.000
Finding self-fulfilment	222	1.47	0.684	0.046	-33.380	221	0.000
Contributing to field, society and community	222	1.47	0.677	0.045	-33.600	221	0.000
Work-life balance	220	1.73	0.836	0.056	-22.491	219	0.000
Making money	222	1.97	1.033	0.069	-14.813	221	0.000
Being promoted	222	2.23	1.116	0.075	-10.283	221	0.000

The results indicate that the respondents agreed significantly with the following as being their ultimate career goals:

Becoming an expert (mean = 1.40, p-value = 0.000).

Being successful (mean = 1.43, p-value = 0.000).

Finding self-fulfilment (mean = 1.47, p-value = 0.000).

Contributing to field, society and community (mean = 1.47, p-value = 0.000).

Work-life balance (mean = 1.73, p-value = 0.000).

Making money (mean = 1.97, p-value = 0.000).

Being promoted (mean = 2.23, p-value = 0.000).

4.5.9. Does gender have an influence on career choice?

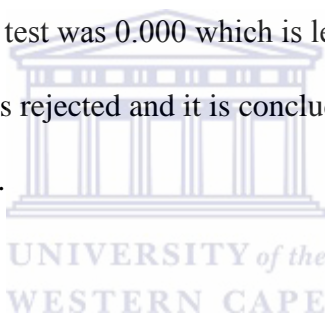
Table 11. Cross-tabulation between gender and career choice

Department / Career Field * Gender Cross-tabulation						
			Gender			
			Male	Female	Total	
Department / Career Field	Admin	Count	10	29	39	
		% within Department / Career Field	25.6%	74.4%	100.0%	
	Sales	Count	34	11	45	
		% within Department / Career Field	75.6%	24.4%	100.0%	
	Service	Count	66	23	89	
		% within Department / Career Field	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%	
	Parts	Count	34	8	42	
		% within Department / Career Field	81.0%	19.0%	100.0%	
	Support Services	Count	2	2	4	
		% within Department / Career Field	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	
	Total		Count	146	73	219
			% within Department / Career Field	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	Chi-Square Tests					
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	37.743 ^a	4	.000	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test	35.632			.000		
N of Valid Cases	219					
a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.33.						

The test was conducted at 5% significance level and thus the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value of the Chi-square test is less than 0.05. The results are indicated in Table 11 above.

The results revealed that of the 219 respondents who indicated their gender and their department, 39 were in the administration department, 45 in sales, 89 in service, 42 in parts and 4 in support services. Of the 39 respondents in the administration department, 25.6% were male and 74.4% were female. On the other hand, sales was made up of 75.6% male and 24.4 female, service 74.2% male and 25.8% female, parts 81% male and 19% female, while support services had an equal split of male and female respondents.

The p-value of the Fisher's exact test was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (the significance level). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is an association between career choice and gender.



4.5.10. Does the highest level of education have an influence on career choice?

To test this hypothesis the Chi-square test of association was conducted with the null hypothesis being that there is no association between the highest level of education and career choice. The alternative hypothesis was that there is an association between the highest level of education and career choice.

The test was conducted at 5% significance level and thus the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value of the Chi-square test is less than 0.05. The results are indicated in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Cross-tabulation between highest education level and career choice

Department / Career Field * Highest educational Level Cross tabulation						
			Highest educational level			
			Grade 8 – 12	Diploma and above	Total	
Department /Career Field	Admin	Count	24	13	37	
		% within Department / Career Field	64.9%	35.1%	100.0%	
	Sales	Count	27	16	43	
		% within Department / Career Field	62.8%	37.2%	100.0%	
	Service	Count	58	28	86	
		% within Department / Career Field	67.4%	32.6%	100.0%	
	Parts	Count	30	11	41	
		% within Department / Career Field	73.2%	26.8%	100.0%	
	Support Services	Count	1	3	4	
		% within Department / Career Field	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	
	Total		Count	140	71	211
			% within Department / Career Field	66.4%	33.6%	100.0%
	Chi-Square Tests					
		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	4.244 ^a	4	.374	.382		
Fisher's Exact Test	4.038			.394		
N of Valid Cases	211					
a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.35.						

The p-value of the Fisher's exact test was 0.394 which is greater than 0.05 (the significance level). This means that the null hypothesis could not be rejected and it is concluded that there is no association between the highest level of education and career choice.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The literature and the results indicate that there is a relationship between an individual's career choice and various factors which may influence it. In this section, the results generated from the study will be looked at more closely and will be discussed in regards to the hypotheses and literature. Recommendations for future studies as well as for management implications will be made.

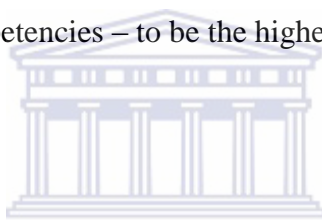
5.2. Discussion

The results indicated that career choice is mainly dependent on individual variables such as personal interest and talent, skills and abilities; environmental variables such as business opportunities, work experience in the field, as well as the prospects of benefits such as employment security, potential for personal growth and development, opportunities to use skills and abilities, the availability of employment, and the potential to earn a high income in the future – to mention but a few. The study also revealed the influence of situational variables such as, association with others in the field and parents' or relatives' advice. The various hypotheses will now be discussed, taking the relevant literature into account.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between individual variables (talent, skills and abilities and personal interests) and career choice amongst individuals.

This hypothesis is partially accepted and the results indicate that the main factors influencing career choice amongst employees in the motor retail industry was personal interests – rated the highest, as well as talents, skills and abilities. These findings were aligned to literature

and research conducted which showed that personal interest was listed as the main source influencing career choice. This finding is supported by other studies, notably that of Adams et al. (2006). These researchers identified personal interest as a factor when evaluating science students' perceptions. Later, Aderemi, Ilori, Siyanbola, Adegbite and Abereijo (2008) found that the most significant motivator for women to pursue technological ventures was also personal interests. This finding is similar to that of Dick and Rallis (1991) who found that women regarded interest in a career as more important than remuneration. Conversely, their male counterparts indicated remuneration as more important. Talent, skills and abilities were found to be the second highest factors influencing an individual's career choice. Rousseau and Venter (2007) similarly found talent, skills and abilities – they described these as cognitive competencies – to be the highest contributing factors influencing initial and future career choice.



H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between situational variables (parents or relatives' advice, friend or peers' influence, school teacher/lecturer's influence, association with others in the field, academic performance, culture, religion, role models and socio-economic background) and career choice amongst individuals.

This hypothesis is partially accepted and results indicated that parents' or relatives' advice as well as association with others in the field was also highlighted as the most influential situational variables when making a career choice in the motor retail industry. Parents or relative's involvement was also found to be an influential factor in several studies, including that of Dick and Rallis (1991), Myburgh (2005), Salami (2007) and Tang et al. (1999). Young (1994) concurs that parents initially influence their children's career development as they provide assistance and security. Interestingly, the study of Hashim and Embong (2015)

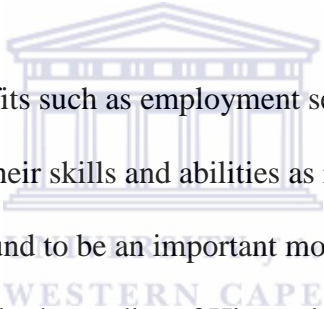
concur with the current finding that parents influence individual career choice more than friends or peers do. Contrary to the studies of Salami (2007) and Trauth, Quesenberry and Haung (2008) which found that culture, socio-economic background and religion plays a significant role in influencing career choice, it was not confirmed within the current study. Quimby and DeSantis (2006) found that role models can play a significant part in influencing career choice however in this study, it was clear that participants deemed an association with someone already in the career field as a more significant factor. This result was consistent with that of the cross-cultural study of Auyeung and Sands (1997) which found that association with others in the accountancy field was the most influential factor for Hong Kong and Taiwanese students, as opposed to Australian students, for choosing a career in this field. Interestingly, studies conducted by Myburgh (2005) and Paolillo and Estes (1982) did not find association with others as one of the highest significant factors amongst their participants examining career choice. This may indicate that participants in this study deemed interaction with those associated or already in the motor retail industry whether it was a relative, friend, neighbors, associations or acquaintance as valuable in influencing their career choice.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between environmental variables (work experiences and business opportunities) and career choice amongst individuals.

The participants rated business opportunities and work experience as factors influencing their career choices. Work experience was also highlighted as an important factor influencing career choice. This is similar to the study of Lent et al. (2002) which focused on factors influencing college students in their career choices, and identified direct and indirect exposure to work-related activities and work conditions as significant. Rousseau and Venter

(2007) state that experiences in general allow individuals to change their perceptions and attitudes not only in regards to career choice but also to factors that influence them.

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between perceived benefits (career flexibility, prestige, lifestyle and social status, challenging and interesting career, possibility of becoming a CEO or director of a company, availability of employment, employment security, initial earning potential, future earning potential, promotional prospects, personal growth and development, potential to travel, self-employment, size of the organisation, on-the-job training and specialization, opportunity to use skills and abilities) and career choice.



Participants highlighted that benefits such as employment security, potential for personal growth, and opportunities to use their skills and abilities as influencing their career choices. Employment security was also found to be an important motivator when pursuing a career. This finding was also highlighted in the studies of Hite and McDonald (2003) and Bundy and Norris (1992). The latter researchers found that when people initially look at jobs or careers the most important factors they consider are job security, challenging or interesting work, and advancement potential. Similarly, the study of Myburgh (2005) in the accountancy field found that the opportunity to use skills and abilities was rated as one of the most important factors which influence career choice. Furnham (1997) found that individuals naturally seek environments that allow them to utilise their skills. Similar to the study of Myburgh (2005), an individual's desire for personal growth and development was again highlighted in the results. This study also found that the potential to travel, the possibility of becoming a director or CEO or being self-employed a benefits that were regarded as the least important factors influencing career choice. Coincidentally, the study of Myburgh (2005) also found that

students listed self-employment and the potential to travel the least influential factors for career choice.

The results obtained in this study support the notion of Rousseau and Venter (2006), Myburgh (2005), Greenhouse et al. (2000) that career choice is influenced by individual, environmental and situational variables. Super (1980) is also of the opinion that situational and individual variables play a vital role when it comes to career development.

H5: There is a statistically significant relationship between exposure to organisational career support activities and career development.

In this study it was found that the respondents felt that they had exposure to career support activities within the organisation for career-development purposes. Tansky and Cohen (2002), when studying organisational commitment and perceived organisational support in relation to career development, found that when organisations make a conscious effort to develop their managers they not only become committed to the organisation but are also more likely to invest in and develop their employees. A further study conducted by Lee and Bruvold (2003) found that individual's will be more satisfied within their jobs and committed to an organisation when an employer commits to developing employees holistically. Manyasi, Kibas and Chepkilot (2013) also found that organisational support for career development affected the behaviour and performance of employees in a positive way. In the study of Hurtz and Williams (2009) it was found that the availability of opportunities for development was rated highly amongst the factors influencing participation. Furthermore, the researchers noted an increased awareness amongst employees of development activities in order to increase participation. Kannan (2007) states that organisational focus on career development is now more important than ever as in order to

protect their human assets employers must provide employees with the tools and resources to manage their careers. This might also help to align the employee's vision of success to the strategic goals of the organisation.

H6: There is a statistically significant relationship between utilisation of organisational career support activities and career development.

Literature has emphasized on individual's taking charge and responsibility of their own careers (Gunz & Jalland, 1996; Iles, 1997; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher & Demarr, 1998). A study by Fouad et al. (2009) also indicated that when students participate in courses similarly to career support activities, designed to increase their career decision making ability and assist with career exploration, it was found that after individual's partook in these courses their career decision-making difficulties decreased and their career self –efficacy increased. Premarajan (2007), in a survey of 500 Indian-based companies, found that the top three most-used career development practices were external seminars and workshops (61%), job rotation (60%), and in-house training and development programmes (50%). In this study participants were asked which career support activities have they utilized or participated in within their organisation or externally in order to assist with career development. The participants in this study indicated that although the organisations exposed their staff to career support activities, most employees only utilised training and mentoring for career development purposes. However they have not utilized other career support activities such as career assessments, coaching, career planning or personal development plans either within the organisation or externally to assist with career development activities. The lack of utilization of various career support activities either internally or externally can have a negative effect on the individuals' overall career development. This notion is supported by

the study of Fouad et al. (2006) that found that there was an underutilisation of university career assistant programmes by students in their study. Consequently, this affected students' career decisions as well as their overall career development negatively. The success of these activities or effectiveness thereof is measured by the individual's active and voluntary participation.

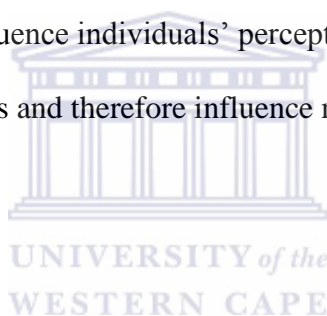
H7: There is a statistically significant relationship between management's support and career development.

Results indicated that participants felt that their managers or supervisors supported their career development and management in the organisation. This finding was supported by Noe (1996) that management's support and engagement is important for an individual's overall performance and development. Based on their examination of employees' participation, Noe and Wilk (1993) found that their involvement in development activities was influenced by their perceptions of the social support from managers and peers. Noe and Wilk (1993) also found that the employees' perceptions of the type of work they engage in influenced their development activities as well.

H8: There is a statistically significant relationship between an individual's gender and career choice.

Within this study it was evident that gender also influenced the career choice of participants. Females were more likely to be in the administration department as compared to males who were more likely to choose a career in service and parts. This finding is supported by previous works which found that there is a relationship between gender and career choice.

This was corroborated by Dick and Rallis (1991) who found that there was a significant difference between the career choice of men and that of women when choosing engineering as a career. In this study women were far less likely to choose engineering as a career. Other studies have also indicated a difference between gender and career choice, notably in the studies of Behrend et al. (2007); Hite and McDonald (2003) and Salami (2007). These differences between gender and career choice is especially evident in male dominated careers as shown by the investigation of the above studies. Therefore it is not surprising to find gender influencing career choice within the motor retail industry either as there exist predominantly, traditional male-dominated careers. Correll (2001) argues that cultural beliefs relating to gender are at the forefront of differences in career decisions amongst men and women; these cultural beliefs influence individuals' perceptions of their competence in regards to various career decisions and therefore influence men and women to pursue different career paths.



H.9: There is a statistically significant relationship between an individual's educational level and career choice.

There was also an investigation done to explore whether the level of education had an influence on career choice. Research that has been conducted on assessing factors that influence an individual's career choice have focused more on the affects parents' educational level and family's perception of education and how it influences individual career choice (Kniveton, 2004; Pearson & Bieschke, 2001). This study however focused on whether the individual's own educational level had a significant impact on their career choice. The results indicate that an individual's level of education did not influence career choice. These results were supported by the findings of Lewa and Ndungu (2012), namely that

educational levels did not play a significant role in an individual's career choice in agriculture.

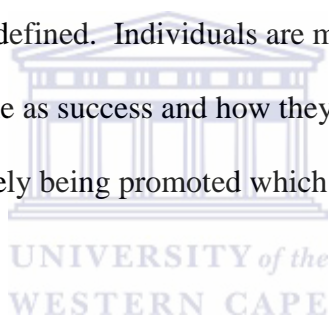
H10: There is a statistically significant relationship between discrimination (gender, age, religion, culture or race) and career choice amongst individuals.

The results indicate that the participants within the study did not perceive there to be any discrimination based on gender, age, religion, culture or race in their chosen career. This result is consistent with that of Evans and Herr (1994) which found that perceptions of discrimination were not related to career aspirations of college students within their study. This is contrary to the study of Zerbinos and Clanton (1992) of Public Relations as a career choice, which found that labour market discrimination was a concern with some participants within the study. Even though black and older respondents did not perceive to have experienced discrimination within the field, minority males disagreed. They cited that most of the minority males occupy low level jobs therefore career advancement becomes more challenging to move into management positions. These participants highlighted racism as the reason for the lack of minority males in management positions. For this reason, Zerbinos and Clanton (1992) state that due to the lack of possible movement and perceived discrimination it may deter a lot of minorities from pursuing a career in the communication field.

Participants were also asked when they decided on their career choice, most of the participants in the current study made a career decision, when entering their current posts, after school or starting a first job. If one examines the results in regards to super's (1980) life stages of career development, it appears that most individual's in this study decided on their career choice in either the exploration phase and/or established phase. This would be in line

with the findings of the study, as individuals in these stages base their career decisions on their talent, skills and abilities. This could also be an indication of where recruitment efforts within the motor retail industry should be focussed.

The participants were also asked what their ultimate career goal is and the results indicate that although all career goals were perceived as statistically significant, it was evident that *becoming an expert* and *being successful* were rated the highest whilst, surprisingly, being *promoted* scored the lowest of the options. This could be because individuals may perceive having control in realising the first two goals as they can then equip themselves with both theoretical and operational knowledge in order to achieve it. And also as discussed in the literature, success is individually defined. Individuals are more likely to gain and maintain control over that which they define as success and how they will achieve it (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006), compared to merely being promoted which is largely influenced by management.

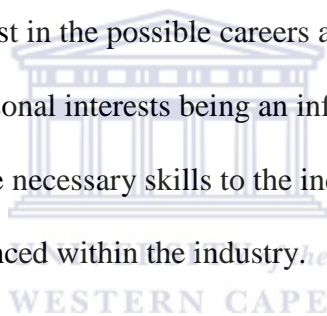


5.3. Recommendations

It is therefore recommended for future studies to examine the relationship between career choice factors and career development more holistically. This can be especially effective from an organisational context in order to align goals of the individual with that of the organisation. There could also be a further studies done on the effects and the effectiveness of career support activities on career choice as well as on the overall career decision making process.

It is the hope that the factors identified which influence career choice could assist career counsellors and human resource practitioners responsible for career guidance, career

management and recruitment strategies. Specifically within the motor retail industry, recruitment should be focused on people at school level already, so when making a career choice or after completing school the individual has had exposure to the possible careers in the motor industry. This is especially crucial as most individuals have indicated that a decisive factor in their career choice has been being associated with someone within the career field. The motor retail industry in particular should try to promote the careers that they have as most people only seem to consider or decide on the career within the industry in their current roles or after school. Therefore the industry may be losing potential recruits to other fields and missing the opportunity to attract these individuals to the motor retail industry before a career choice is made. The promotion of careers within the motor retail industry may also create an interest in the possible careers an individual can choose from, as the study has also shown that personal interests being an influential factor on career choice. This may assist with attracting the necessary skills to the industry as there is a concern for the skills shortages currently experienced within the industry.



As highlighted gender seems to be a very important factor influencing career choices amongst participants therefore active inclusion of women in careers within the industry is important, especially the promotion and inclusion of women in non- traditional careers. There should also be active encouragement of and facilitation of career development of women currently within the motor retail industry in order to break down the gender stereotypes.

Organisations should provide a more extensive range of career support activities, if not possible, they should drive awareness of such activities outside the organisation. This could form part of the promotion within the organisation to encourage individual's to taking

personal ownership for their own career development however not minimizing the role or assistance that the organisation.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

In this study there were no interviews conducted which limited gaining deeper insight into the research area. Sekaran (2001) states that, “ *the main advantage of face-to-face or direct interviews is that the researcher can adapt the questions as necessary, clarify doubts, and ensure that the responses are properly understood, by repeating or rephrasing the questions*” (p. 230). The study made use of convenience sampling and therefore excluded generalisability. The questionnaire comprised eight pages and it was initially feared that this may deter respondents from completing the whole questionnaire. The questionnaire was primarily drafted in English and there was a concern that it could minimise the cooperation of non-English speaking respondents. The study was also faced with demographic challenges in that the various branches were spread over an extended area, stretching from the Boland to the southern suburbs. It was therefore difficult to distribute some of the questionnaires in person and these were sent to branches electronically. Because of the demographic make-up of the organisation (Figure 2.1), there is an unequal gender distribution with men making up 65 % of the respondents.

5.5. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to examine the factors that influence career choice and if organisational career support systems can assist with either choice or further development. This was done based on the notion that a career encompasses the choices the individual would have to continuously make in his or her lifetime. In the study factors which directly

impact on career choice, based on the conceptual career choice model as well as other literature identified in the previous chapters such as individual, situational and environmental variables were discussed. Parents' or relatives' advice and influence, that of friends or peers, school teachers and lecturers, gender, association with others in the field, academic performance, culture, religion, role models and socio-economic background are all factors related to *situational variables*. The *individual variables* are accounted for by factors such as talent, skills, abilities, and personal interests. The *environmental variables* are represented by work experience and business opportunities. A combination of the individual, situational and environmental variables were also identified as perceived benefits in pursuing a career choice and included factors such as career flexibility, prestige, lifestyle and social status, challenging and interesting career, possibility of becoming a CEO or director of a company, availability of employment, employment security, initial earning potential, future earning potential, promotional prospects, personal growth and development, potential to travel, self-employment, size of the organisation, on-the-job training and specialization, opportunity to use skills and abilities. A Likert –style scale examining the importance of the various factors for career choice was used. The scores derived from the instrument had acceptable estimated reliability which was calculated by the Cronbach's Alpha.

The results conclude that some of the proposed individual, situational and environmental factors were related to individuals' career choice within the motor retail industry. Participants indicated that parents' or relatives' advice, association with others in the field, talent, skills and abilities, business opportunities and personal interests influenced their career choices. The participants also identified perceived benefits such as employment security, potential for personal growth and development and opportunity to use skills and abilities as influential factors on career choice.

It was also found that gender was an influential factor in participants' career choice. The study also yielded that management support and organisational career support activities for career development activities were present as reported by respondents. However there seems to be an underutilization of career support activities either internally or externally of the organisation for career development purposes.

To conclude, it is evident that it is not only the variables that influence career choice but also certain process and activities such as career indecision and career development. It is important to note that these processes and variables have an intertwined relationship according to which one may influence, interact or follow another. Making career choices about career paths should therefore be addressed in a manner that enables individuals, whether they are high school students, first years, graduates or employees, to be aware of these influencing factors, the impact thereof, and the processes that will allow them to make more effective career choices through guidance. It is also apparent that in retrospect a career choice is not just about one specific facet of an individual life, but rather a combination of the satisfaction of personal, environmental and psychological needs. This study attempted to bridge the gap between establishing the influences, examining the career-decision process, and ultimately link these to organisational support such as perception on exposure, career activities, and management support.

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