

THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF BLACKS IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION  
PROGRAMMES

BY

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## DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this research is the result of my own investigation and that it is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any other degree.

Signed Ismapojo

Date: 23 January 1997

I certify that the above statement is correct.

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## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the experiences of Africans within the management ranks in South African organisations in the private sector. It examines progress (successes and failures) in the implementation of affirmative action programmes.

The research further examines power as a concomitant of the managerial role. It argues that the approach that uses the notion of socio-psychological barriers directed to the individual aspirant may be incomplete in explaining lack of mobility if it fails to account for the broader power dynamics and structures within South African organisations.

Furthermore, it explores attributes of individual managers as well as those of organisations in order to establish the fit between the individual and the organisation, looks at practices that are often associated with affirmative action programmes and describes empirically the experiences of black managers in such settings. The research concludes that in the absence of programmes that enable aspirant executives to empower themselves psychologically for upward mobility, affirmative action programmes may not be sustainable.

The underlying assumption of this research is that the historical legacy which subjected Africans to an official policy of discrimination for decades impeded their upward mobility in the labour market, thus enabling the white labour force to occupy a position of privilege in the private sector. In such settings white managers are confronted with the role of implementing affirmative action programmes which pose a threat to the privileges they have grown accustomed to. White managers are thus perceived by their black counterparts as reluctant agents of change.

The research is guided by the hypotheses that where blacks in managerial positions perceive themselves as being unable to influence organisational decisions, or as having no control over resources, people and information, they would feel that

affirmative action is disempowering.

To obtain the required information a structured interview schedule with both open-ended and closed-ended questions was used. Questions tapped the perceptions of black managers regarding their empowerment in employing organisations. Face-to-face interviews with 100 black managers from the private sector were conducted by the author. The resultant data was captured on a computer data base and then subjected to various forms of statistical analyses.

The main predictor of feelings of empowerment was found to be the manager's centrality in decision-making processes. It was also found that positive relationships with superiors and colleagues influenced feelings of empowerment, as did membership of corporate clubs. Job rank was positively related to relationships with superiors and colleagues.

It was also found that affirmative action environments presented this group with some contradictions: they advanced much slower than their white colleagues, and supervised largely, or only blacks, and/or are in specialist positions with no budgetary control. Organisational climate factors (negative attitudes and unfair promotional practices) were still perceived to be in place. Educational qualifications were not found to be good predictors of empowerment.

The findings suggest that affirmative action programmes need to take the heterogeneity of managers into account. Management must show that managing diversity is crucial to their productivity and competitiveness. It is also important for such programmes to examine the format of corporate clubs, and consider altering them to accommodate the social reality of black managers. Lastly, a fundamental transformation of power relations is necessary so that decision-makers operate from more or less the same level of power.

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Dedicated to my parents,  
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for their conviction that progress comes through education.

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## CHAPTER 1

### **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA : THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

For four decades, until recently, blacks were subjected to an official policy of discrimination which was calculated to impede their upward mobility in the labour market:

no black person could be in a position of command or supervision over whites;

no black person would replace a white person, job reservation was practised and white artisans could refuse to train black apprentices;

inequalities were structured along racial lines and were therefore more visible than would have been the case had the divisions been based for instance on class or caste.

As a result the country is presently faced with white managers in positions of control over their black counterparts, and these white managers are being over-extended because of skilled person-power shortages, especially at managerial levels (Sadie, 1991; Albetyn and White; IDASA, 1995). Ironically, whites as beneficiaries constitute a numerical minority (less than one fifth of the total population) and this has implications both in the organisational capacity of the (previously) disadvantaged group(s) and in the supply/demand variable, both of which pose a threat to the economy of the country.

Although the changes in industrial relations legislation and codes of employment practice, in the 70's, subsequently encouraged the focus on black advancement programmes by concerned researchers (Schlemmer and Boulanger, 1978; Natrass, 1983; Adler, 1984; Charoux, 1985; Human and Hofmeyr, 1985; Cochiu, 1986; Human, 1986; Sebesho, 1986; Khoza, 1986; Mercer, 1986; Mafuna, 1986; Pascoe, 1986; Schlemmer, 1986; Huss and Daniel, 1987; Hofmeyr, 1987; Manning, 1987; Nasser, 1987; Prekel, 1987; Dinsdale, 1988; Moshikaro, 1988), these researchers perceived the programmes to have been unsuccessful.

This lack of success was, and still is, evident in the debates that go on about the concept of affirmative action from researchers, practitioners and academics who all argue that affirmative action has had very poor results ( Smollan, 1986; Pruett, 1986; Ndlovu et al., 1988; Sadie, 1988; SAIRR, 1988/89; Human, 1989; Van Rooyen, 1989; Maphai, 1989; Hofmeyr, 1989; Allen, 1990; Nel and Nel, 1990; Charoux, 1990; Human, 1992; Adams, 1993; Innes and Kentridge, 1993; Albertyn and White, 1994; IDASA, 1995; Nzimande and Sikhosana, 1996). Despite such negative evaluations of the programme, there is also evidence of some positive developments.

The evaluations of the progress made, and thus the success rate of the programme, may be expressed by statistics as well as by conclusions based on perceptions, experiences and observations. This discussion starts with the definition of manager, follows with positive developments in affirmative action programmes, analyses the problem and its historical context, the research objectives, the research questions and finally the definition of other terms used in the text whose meanings are somewhat confusing.

\*A manager is one who:

*disadvantages*

- carries a position that is lower than that of an executive, but above the first line supervisory rank (Wella, 1983);
- sets objectives, organises both activities and people, motivates and communicates, establishes yardsticks and develops not only people but also himself (Drucker, 1974);
- within the South African context and from the social psychological perspective, the term should be understood within the framework of domination in which a clear distinction is made between a dominant few (who have power) and a subordinate group (upon whom power is exerted) (Watkins and Mauer, 1994).

In addition, since affirmative action programmes in South Africa are mainly controlled by white managers (Nzimande, 1991), black management is largely a political process involving black managers (who are being empowered) and white managers (who play a crucial role in the empowerment process).

## 1.1 Affirmative Action : Positive developments

The following developments were noted in the mid eighties by Smollan (1986):

- The issue of black advancement featured in almost every personnel management convention;
- Seminars run mainly by the University of South Africa, the Mangosuthu Technikon and a group of companies headed by First National Bank and A.E.C.I. attracted significant audiences. This could suggest that companies were now more willing to share ideas and expose themselves to criticism;
- The Black Management Forum provided social support for its members (ibid).
- A growing body of research on black advancement appeared in management journals and other publications. The Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town established a Centre for African Management which conducted research into black advancement issues (ibid);
- The Post Graduate Institute, in conjunction with the Graduate School of Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, ran a development programme for black graduates. The pre-university bursary scheme at the same university involved a one-year bridging programme and several of the participating companies provided sponsorship, monitoring, enrichment and vacation jobs during the course of a bachelor's degree (ibid);
- The Paris Chamber of Commerce introduced a programme involving, amongst others, French companies which would concentrate on the development of junior managers (mostly black);
- More in-company programmes appeared, and there was a change in white attitudes. For example, First National Bank, as its case study indicates, produced several video programmes on South African ethnic groups which

were used as part of a cross-cultural human relations programme (ibid).

In terms of figures, there has been an increase in the number of blacks in managerial positions. It is the smallness of the base from which blacks originate as well as their numbers in terms of the total population that makes such shifts appear negligible.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) has a policy on affirmative action in place. This puts affirmative action on the national agenda. It suggests that affirmative action policies at organisational level can now be pursued within the broader strategy of the country's empowerment policies.

\* The predominance of blacks in the GNU provides an opportunity for the previously disadvantaged groups to play a meaningful role in the process of socio-economic empowerment. For instance, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is one out of a number of concerted commitments of the GNU to people empowerment.

The South African parliament has set up a Commission on Gender Equality. Similarly, the Department of Labour is working on legislation for equity issues so as to transform the labour market into a non-sexist non-racist society.

Projections suggest that in the private sector the number of high level professional blacks will increase by 1290 percent (from 30611 to 425400) if high economic growth is combined with aggressive affirmative action. This will see 51 percent of all high level professionals being black by the year 2013 (SAIRR, The Mercury, January 2, 1996:4).

\* Despite the advances indicated by the above developments, a dilemma that continues to bedevil equal opportunity employers is whether certain training and development strategies should be centred on black staff or made multi-racial. If management perceives that it is only black employees who need special attention

there is a real danger that these programmes will be received with reluctance by black staff and perpetuate the notion that they are inferior. The following section elaborates on similar issues.

## 1.2 The Problem and its Historical Context

The problems associated with affirmative action programmes can be summarised as follows:

\* The South Africa private sector is presently experiencing gross skilled person-power shortages, especially at managerial levels, which will worsen by the year 2000.

\* The white cadre of management is already over-extended and cannot compensate for such human resource deficiencies.

\* There are still very few Africans and women in the managerial echelons. This limited number is found in relatively junior levels of management, predominantly in human resources departments in "specialist" positions where they serve mainly blacks.

\* Blacks are poorly represented in the fields of engineering, science, medicine, architecture, accounting and management - the key positions in the economy and centres of decision-making which reflect power relations in organisations.

\* In the public sector there is a preponderance of blacks in the fields of education and nursing.

The following paragraphs are devoted to further explaining these problems.

Smollan (1986) stated that the supply of suitable person-power to South African industry would not be adequate to maintain a growing economy. According to this author, the situation was created not only by a person-power shortage, but

also by a dearth of suitably trained personnel at all levels from the skilled entry point through to the executive management levels. Concerning the person-power shortages, Pruett (1986) further argued that South Africa will have a very serious shortage of this resource by the year 2000.

He added that it was not only necessary to add significant numbers to the South African labour force to ensure economic growth, but also that such numbers should have quality in terms of education and skills. Although there was not much that white management could do to improve the quality of education for blacks, there were a number of enabling tactics intra-organisationally (like a focus on organisational climate factors) that management could embark on in the process of improving job skills of black managers in affirmative action settings.

Despite such early concerns about affirmative action the situation seems not to have changed much in subsequent years.

There are some contradictions, with regard to such skilled human resource shortages in this country, which need to be addressed. For example, several analysts maintain that whilst on the one hand there is an acute shortage of skilled staff in the managerial and technical fields, on the other hand there is an abundance of unskilled labour and a number of unemployed and unemployable blacks in South Africa (see Human, 1986 ; Smollan, 1986; Schoeman, 1990; Human, 1992).

It is, however, not within the scope of this research to discuss such contradictions at length, but rather to describe the situation objectively with the aim of highlighting both the successes and failures of affirmative action programmes. The object (long term) is to contribute to the planning of alternative approaches to affirmative action, especially those directed at managerial levels.

In the late 80's almost 90 percent of the South African working population was semi-skilled or unskilled. In addition, the country was experiencing serious skilled person-power shortages especially at managerial level, and projections estimated more shortages by the year 2000. For instance, estimates were that there would be at least 210 000 managerial vacancies by the year 2000. If this is so there should be an estimated maximum 42 000 available whites for managerial

positions. This suggests that the remaining 168 000 will have to be black (SAIRR, 1988/89).

Sadie (1988) and Hofmeyr (1989) added that about 5 percent of all South African managers employed by white-owned companies were "black," even though this racial categorisation includes Asians and so-called "Coloured" managers as well as Africans. Specifically, Charoux (1992) argued that during 1992 Africans comprised 2 percent of all South African managers. These statistics raise some concern given the fact that Africans constitute nearly three-quarters of the total population and whites less than one-fifth, and that research findings suggest that deficits of managers and professional staff will rise over 100 000 and nearly 250 000 respectively by the turn of the century (Sadie, 1988).

\* Gender

The situation is complicated by the fact that there is a human resource often overlooked by South African corporations - women, particularly at managerial levels (Erwee, 1989). Research in this area suggested that only 9 percent of managerial positions were occupied by women (Hofmeyr, 1989). Considering that white women had more representation in this category than their black counterparts (Central Statistical Services, 1991) it is not surprising that a higher percentage of the total comprises white women. It would be interesting to discover whether the situation has now improved or not. By way of comparison, in 1987 in the United States of America 36 percent of executive positions were occupied by women, although it is not clear how many of those were black (in the United States blacks constitute approximately 12 percent of the population and 54 percent in South Africa).

In 1988 there were 40 045 vacancies in professional, technical and managerial occupations for all races. At this rate by the year 2 000 there will be a shortage of 228 000 employees with university degrees or diplomas (SAIRR, 1988/89). In this regard Sadie (1991) stated that the white South African managerial cadre is already over-extended. She further argued that even if the 1965-1985 inflow of migrants (with a net gain of 37762 and 30598 respectively) is repeated, it was unlikely to compensate for person-power deficiencies in the managerial ranks induced by the diminishing relative strength of the white labour force.

The scarcity of technical skill was equally disturbing. Estimates indicated that there would be a shortage of approximately 200 000 technically skilled people by the year 2000. At the moment, there are 23 000 apprentices in training in South Africa. This compares very poorly to the estimated 700 000 apprentices in training in West Germany. In this regard Nel and Nel (1990) argued that, given the smaller population and economy in South Africa, the country should have at least 150 000 apprentices in training. The situation worsened with the rising emigration of white professionals (Maphai, 1989; Nzimande, 1991).

Human (1994) state that in surveys conducted in 1991/1992, Potchefstroom University and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) indicated that the ratio between management and workers in South Africa is reaching unmanageable levels. Nel and Nel (1990) argued that if management was defined as those having the capacity to translate and implement company policy then the current management to worker ratio is 1:60. According to these authors current trends indicated that this would deteriorate to 1:72 by 1995 and 1:110 by the turn of the century. The authors argued that South African organisations should have a ratio of 1 manager for about every 25 workers. Similar comparisons for the United States of America indicated that they had a ratio of 1:16 while Japan has 1:10, and Australia 1:14.

In addition, research undertaken by the Institute for Future Research at the University of Stellenbosch showed in March 1989 that, based on current trends, the supply of top managers and entrepreneurs between the years of 1980 and 2000 might increase by only approximately 94 000, while the demand would increase by 197 000, giving a shortfall of 103 000 managers and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, by the year 2000 South Africa would need an additional 120 000 senior executives (SAIRR 1989/90). The report further stated that the greatest skills shortage in South Africa (at managerial levels) is at middle and lower levels. It continued to argue that the reason behind this is the fact that organisations did not prepare their skilled specialists for a career in management; individuals were merely appointed and not trained for the job.

These facts suggest a poor success rate of affirmative action especially as it applies to managerial occupations. Further, the South African practitioners interviewed in 1989 all indicated that they were in token positions that had impressive job titles but lacked real authority; they were kept on the periphery of the inner sanctums of power, and were faced with resistance by white middle management to make "equal employment opportunity" a reality. They perceived whites at middle managerial levels to be unreceptive to the changes sought by their seniors (top management); and they (middle managers) were placed in positions where they could effectively see that changes were not made (Human, 1992). Black managers specifically cited middle management as their chief enemy.

Across the professions, blacks represented 7,4 percent of the total accounting profession, 8,1 percent of medical doctors, 2,9 percent of architects, 17,5 percent of all technicians, 5,5 percent of all scientists and 0,1 percent of all engineers. However, they represented 60 percent of all educationists (SAIRR, 1988/89). These statistics showed that blacks were poorly represented in the fields of science and economics. These are not only key positions in the economy, they are also centres of power in decision-making and thus reflect the power relations in organisations as well as the broader society.

The predominance of blacks in the fields of education and nursing is due to the fact that these "professions" have been amongst the few careers that were totally open to Africans and coloureds (Kuper, 1965). By and large, such professions fall within the ambit of the state, where incumbents exercise very little power.

Also disturbing are the estimates by industrialists throughout the country regarding the time it takes to develop an artisan or an engineer or a manager. According to these estimates it takes at least eight years to grow and nurture one good artisan, and between 14 and 18 years to develop one good engineer. The average estimates for the development of a competent manager range between 20 and 25 years (Nel and Nel, 1990). Depending on how these estimates were developed, if they reflect the development of an average white manager, artisan

\* or engineer it would be expected to take a longer time to develop a black counterpart, given their history of poor education, poor facilities and poor teacher qualification. These lengthy time spans suggest that there is no short-term possibility of rapidly increasing the number of black artisans, engineers or managers. One conclusion to draw from these estimates is that the country is not making the grade in meeting the person-power demands of its future.

The black South African practitioners interviewed in 1989 all indicated that they were in token positions that had impressive job titles but lacked real authority; they were kept on the periphery of the inner sanctums of power, and were faced with resistance by white middle management to make "equal employment opportunity" a reality.

In South Africa, even in politically enlightened institutions, blacks were generally required to be more highly qualified for positions previously filled by less-qualified whites (Ndlovu, *et al.*, 1988; Human, 1992). Alternatively, a young black South African would be given a formal mentor to guide him, while a young white graduate from Europe received none, even though his English was poor and his knowledge of South Africa was minimal (Maphai, 1989). There is nothing grossly wrong about the qualification factor, but it is doubtful if educational qualifications have a predictive validity with respect to on-the-job performance. If performance on-the-job is dependent on such criteria, then it could be argued that the criteria are discriminatory.

This may be so because educational qualifications are "constructs" (Maphai, 1989), designed to include or exclude others. They can easily become stumbling blocks to these historically disadvantaged groups - blacks and women.

Adding to the above-stated points is what Maphai (1989:19) referred to as a "subconscious obstacle to genuine affirmative action in South Africa." Maphai argued that institutions in this country still regarded themselves largely as bastions of "maleness", "whiteness" and "cultural supremacy", with blacks and women playing a peripheral role. Maphai (1989) further stated that such institutions transformed affirmative action essentially into "a game involving a weak black team against an overwhelmingly strong white squad." According to him, the tendency was to frustrate capable, qualified and threatening blacks, and "promote" and patronise weak and unqualified blacks. Maphai argued that

overall the consequences of such a scheme were more harmful to blacks than the excluded whites.

Many South African companies denied they used blacks in "token" positions or for window dressing, but continued the practice (Smollan, 1986; Hofmeyr, 1989; Human, 1989). For instance, a survey conducted by the Graduate School of Marketing in 1993 among 98 major South African companies showed that only 14 of those companies had appointed blacks to positions with real management responsibilities (Hofmeyr, 1989).

\* Most South African companies feel that affirmative action was not achieving much in terms of performance by the black job incumbent. This under-performance was generally felt to be due to factors such as lack of ability and poor education - explanations which were founded in the deficit model of black advancement (Maphai, 1989; Human, 1992). However, such an explanation failed to take account of all the factors that impacted on the black manager, like prejudice, stereotyping and the role played by white management - especially the black manager's immediate superior - in the development of the black incumbent. Research in this area suggests that stereotypes, if not blatant discrimination, are rife amongst South African managers who often believe that blacks are less capable than whites (Wella, 1983; Hofmeyr, 1989; Human, 1992; Human, 1994).

✓ Adding to the above arguments, practitioners (Ndlovu *et al.*, 1988) asserted that blacks were still mostly in lower managerial ranks, serving the black market in personnel, industrial relations, marketing and sales departments rather than in critical posts like finance or production. Extending this assertion, Schlemmer (1986) maintained that these were specialised positions in which being black is functional for the performance of a particular role. Practitioners even questioned the concept "manager", when it applied to blacks in this country, since according to them it is a status without power and accountability. They suggested the change of name to that of "specialist".

From attitude surveys and other research it was clear that the perception of many blacks is that discriminatory practices still existed (Hofmeyr, 1989; Human, 1992). If the company was committed to affirmative action at policy level on the one

hand, but there was a perception on the other hand that discriminatory practices still existed, the programme would lack credibility to the group it was intended to benefit - which is a recipe for failure. Affirmative action was already perceived as suffering credibility problems because of the way it produced paternalistic attitudes and practices (Nzimande, 1991).

There were no uniform targets for affirmative action. While this was a controversial issue, Hofmeyer (1989) argued that the companies which had made significant progress with their affirmative action programmes did set targets and did provide additional training and opportunities for targeted employees who had potential. Targets provided something to strive for and a basis for monitoring progress. According to Hofmeyer (1989), if specific targets were not set, companies seemed to continue with training and development programmes without significant changes in the number of blacks and women being promoted to skilled and managerial jobs.

Research suggests that competent members of minority groups at certain levels, like blacks and women, were often accepted by those in power within organisations as valued assistants and co-actors but not as powerful symbols in their own right (Dickens and Dickens, 1982; Wella, 1983; van Rooyen, 1989). Their bases of power were thus of limited value for their own careers. Adding to this, Kanter, (1983) argued that there was also a possibility that such a person might enter an organisation in a high-ranking job in a powerful department but still have little position power.

Kanter suggests three indices to measure position power. These are:

- discretion: the opportunity to plan, design and implement;
- visibility: in tangible results of work and physical location;
- relevance: activities that are central to resolving organisational problems.

There is evidence to the effect that a relatively powerful position that was previously occupied by a white incumbent lost power (job degradation) once a black entered it. There are, for example, instances where white subordinates were transferred to other departments and meaningful responsibilities were removed from the job before a black incumbent takes over (Dickens and Dickens, 1982; Wella, 1983; Ndlovu *et al.*, 1988). As regards such a dilemma, Dickens

and Dickens (1982:234) perceived black managers to be placed in the untenable position of being caught between the proverbial "rock and hard place." They believed that white superiors reinforced such a situation by giving blacks the position power (a managerial position) and then transferring white subordinates to other departments to defuse that power.

The point to be emphasised here is that empowerment becomes operative only when an organisation authorises and enables a black manager to accomplish various tasks for the good of the company - a practice which is still lacking in South African companies (Human, 1992). What aggravated the situation for the black manager, however, is when he or she attempted to use that power and whites subtly pressurised him or her not to use such an organisational power charter (Dickens and Dickens, 1982). This in turn suggested that even if a black manager was able and willing to achieve, the surrounding environment did not allow him to do so, to put it in Human's (1992) language. Such ambiguity caused stress and anxiety for black managers (Dickens and Dickens, 1982). The discussion suggested that unless there are meaningful support networks accessible to black managers, the sustainability of affirmative action may be questionable.

Hofmeyr (1989) further advanced the following general factors as explanations for the failure of employee advancement programmes:

- Inadequate clarification of corporate values and philosophy;
- No strategic human resources planning;
- Lack of line management ownership and accountability.

Training and development programmes offered by companies were often directed at employees identified for promotion. Training might have presented a source of power and a consequence of having power (Goldstein, 1974; Hill, 1980). Because of variances in background experiences, blacks and whites were perceived as requiring different kinds or amounts of training to reach the same level of skill. They were also offered distinct types of training because of differences in the jobs they occupied. This research argues that organisations regulate access to certain kinds of training as part of tracking, including the grooming of whites for powerful positions. If this is so, differential exposure to

training may be perceived by blacks to impede their advancement as it misguidedly labels them as "deficient" (Berryman-Fink and Fink, 1985). Exposure to different types of training may thus reinforce the stereotypes held by some whites about blacks with regard to their level of deficiency.

There is nothing wrong with training if its main objective is to transform organisations, not only blacks and women. Training should convert blacks and women from "slavery", and males (particularly white males) from ignorance about race and gender issues. Affirmative action programmes therefore should not only integrate the target groups into the predominantly white male mainstream but also question the white male stream. For this reason this research argues that while programmes should empower the disadvantaged in particular, they should also, and perhaps more importantly, be designed for management.

\* Continuing to refer to training, Hofmeyr (1989) noted that there were too many programmes directed, by the company of employment, at black managers. The problem with such an approach, the author stated, is the fact that most of what a person learns at work is learned from the boss, peers and subordinates. He argued that such training has its place but it was of minor importance and influence compared to what was learned through having responsibility for the job. Human and Hofmeyr (1985) agreed with this argument, with Human (1992) further stating that for training to be effective it had to be a line manager's responsibility rather than that of the human resource department. This research argues that the training responsibility in most South African organisations still rests with the human resource department, a practice which may not be effective, given the "distant supervision" of employees by this section.

There is also a general agreement amongst most researchers in this field on the following organisational obstacles to black advancement:

- White employee resistance
- White customer resistance
- Companies paying lip-service to the programme of black advancement
- Window-dressing positions given to blacks

## ▪ Marginality of black managers

(See Charoux, 1986a; Human, 1989; Sebesho, 1986; Schlemmer, 1986; Hofmeyr, 1989; Sadie 1991, to cite a few). These authors further agreed that to a major extent the problems are more structural than inherent in blacks. Schlemmer (1986), for instance, even argued that the above and similar conventional explanations, although valid, did not sufficiently explain the limited degree of success that had been achieved by black advancement programmes. Nzimande (1991) argued that what aggravated the situation was the observation that South African companies did not seem to be committed to the development of black managers on the job; instead the companies imported skilled Europeans to solve the person-power shortage problem. This argument suggests that a neglected aspect of the problem is the employment process itself.

✓ Hofmeyr (1989) cited lack of commitment by top management as another obstacle to effective affirmative action. According to him their commitment required more than verbal acknowledgement that affirmative action was important. It required more than the drafting of statements of intent.

Affirmative action objectives were achieved only when top management had considered why affirmative action should be a priority; when it has been convinced that the future of its business depended on the achievement of these objectives; and when it was prepared to commit time and effort to playing a leading role in ensuring that the objectives were met. According to this author, if top management was not committed in the true sense of the word, affirmative action plans were not driven and monitored with the same enthusiasm as other strategic plans - they were marginalised (Hofmeyr, 1989).

Adding to this argument, Human (1989) further stated that her research findings based on black managers' experiences, and complaints by employing companies of under-performance of black managers, had consistently revealed:

- failure by employer organisations to recognise the important role played by company culture in general;
- lack of adequate people management;

- and racism, in particular.

Professor Human reiterated that too often in South African companies failure to perform had been attributed simplistically to a lack of ability amongst black people; rarely have companies recognised the role that organisational climate in general and the values, attitudes, and behaviour of the black person's immediate superior in particular, play in both allowing and motivating the black person to display his/her ability. Neither had such companies recognised the factors in the broader socio-political environment which might, to varying degrees depending on the individual concerned, impact on the manager's motivation, both to identify with corporate life and to work hard.

It is obvious from the above arguments that the pace of black advancement has been slow. Furthermore, black incumbents often feel that their positions are a type of window-dressing without any power. Given the South African skilled person-power projections at managerial levels, one starts to wonder why employing organisations seem to "lack commitment" to the programmes - hence the reported token positions to blacks.

Such a "lack of commitment" could reinforce the stereotypes both black and white have of one another; it may lead to a sense of alienation on the part of black managers and consequently feelings of powerlessness. Unfortunately such feelings are counter-productive and may not contribute much to the alleviation of the problems in question. In this regard Welsh (1988:168) argued that the creation of a competent black cadre is not only essential for post apartheid growth and prosperity but also crucial, in the shorter term, to the reduction of racial polarisation through the creation of non-racial corporate microcosms which are the antithesis of the society as a whole.

As regards black economic empowerment, Mabuza (1988) argued that real economic empowerment needs to focus on production rather than consumerism; real management as against mere salesmanship and supervision of personnel; actual ownership of the national wealth rather than the status of exploited labour and the creation of a restriction-free environment. In conclusion, Mabuza suggested that real black economic empowerment may be virtually unattainable

in the light of political denial and disempowerment in this country. The political changes which have taken place recently in South Africa may have altered this situation. Since the legacy of the apartheid era is still with us, however, no drastic changes are expected in this regard.

Agreeing with Mabuza, Moseneke (1988) contended that no economic, political or legal activity was worthy of being taken seriously if it lacks power. For him power was an indispensable ingredient of economics, politics and indeed law, the lack of which must and does imply impoverishment.

All the facts discussed in this literature survey underline the need for more representation at managerial levels of those historically marginalised and underprivileged groups. At these levels such groups will develop their skills and abilities, so as to successfully control resources within the employing organisations. The facts suggest the need for an introduction of other approaches toward better utilisation of blacks in affirmative action programmes. Such new endeavour is imperative if the country is to survive economically. This research therefore proposes not only running programmes to equip aspirant managers with the psychological skills necessary for them to climb up the corporate ladder but also locating affirmative action within the broader strategy of organisational restructuring and development as important options, worthy of serious consideration.

Experiences of black managers in this country are not unique; black executives in America had similar experiences. For instance, Bramwell (1972) cited his experiences in relation to his research and reported on a thousand other black professionals with sound academic background (which could be expected to put them in a better position to understand the business world) who had had similar experiences. According to him, despite such a sound academic background, they occupied token positions and experienced both overt and subtle racism. Similarly, Jones (1973) added that the absence of organisational support designed to enable the black manager to realise his potential, aggravated the situation for such a job incumbent.

There are no easy solutions to the problems associated with affirmative action programmes. Experience from other countries reveals that obstacles to advancement persist even when legalised discrimination ends. More than five years after the independence of Zimbabwe, allegations were made that the

private sector was denying opportunities to black staff and work-seekers. It is also reported from the United States that African and West Indian immigrants have surpassed the income levels of black Americans, who remain at the bottom of the economic ladder (Smollan, 1986).

This argument, however, is not intended to justify the perceived tokenism associated with affirmative action programmes in South Africa but to highlight the point that South African companies can learn a great deal from the mistakes of other countries and thus handle their situation in a better way. In this regard it is important that the employer organisations ensure that there is a genuine and honest commitment from within which is characterized by social as well as emotional support to the up-and-coming black managers. Hopefully in such a situation black managers may improve their sense of belonging to the organisation and consequently their level of job satisfaction.

The author of this research is aware of the fact that in the case of affirmative action some companies are quick to argue that they will not compromise their policy of selecting and promoting on merit (Hofmeyr, 1989). This is admirable, but given the disadvantages and barriers experienced by black employees, it simply means that the most suitable candidate often turns out to be a white male.

Therefore if a policy of equal opportunities is to be meaningful, blacks need to be given more opportunities to prove themselves and may need more training and development to put them in a position where they can compete on an equal footing with white colleagues.

Affirmative action, by its very nature, introduces a challenge which organisations cannot afford to ignore : the diverse workforce in terms of race, class, gender and ability. Gómez-Mejia *et al.*, (1995) argue that during such times companies which prosper most are those which formulate and implement strategies that capitalise on employee diversity. The authors, however, cautioned that such diversity has to be channelled toward the achievement of the business objectives.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the concept of power as a concomitant of the managerial role. The research argues that while the notion of socio-

psychological barriers to development is an extension of approaches to affirmative action programmes which are directed at the individual aspirant, the concept of barriers may be incomplete in explaining lack of mobility if it fails to account for the broader power dynamics and structures within South African organisations. (The research emphasises the use of affirmative action as a strategy to achieve equity by counteracting the effects of previous discrimination.)

This research contends that the process of empowerment involves access to critical resources, ability to exercise power, and an understanding of the power structures in the organisations.

The research will also hold that power develops over time and grows out of an accumulation of resources during a person's career (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). The acquisition of power will thus be perceived as running parallel to the development of a career. As such, the path to power will be seen to consist of many small steps. For example an individual may start accumulating resources for referent and expert power through education or training. Once in an organisation, power may be built through avenues such as a meaningful position in a powerful department, or through alliances with powerful people.

The study argues that black management in predominantly white organisations is a relatively powerless rank, with job incumbents at that level having minimum control over issues, even those that directly affect their own lives. If this is true, such experiences may lead to feelings of confusion, futility, normlessness, isolation, impotence and self-estrangement. Such managers may be unable to identify some personal, intrinsic rewards in their own activities (Seeman, 1962). The positions of black managers will therefore be examined (job title, status level within the managerial hierarchy, job responsibilities, etc.) with a view to establishing whether these are positions of power or not. Perceptions about the power of the department of employment will be noted. Programmes of mentorship and equal employment opportunity will be examined from the vantage point of the black manager's evaluation of them. The aim will be to determine the "empowering" role of such programmes to the black aspirant.

It will be further argued that informal organisational networks (like corporate

clubs), relations with colleagues and superiors, could have the potential of broadening the black aspirant's understanding of power structures within organisations.

The contribution of this research is to identify the factors that empower or disempower managers in affirmative action settings - the psychological ones in particular. [The research argues that acknowledgement of such factors may help in planning a more empowering and sustainable affirmative action programme.]

## 2. **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

To explore the organisational climate factors (like important factors for selection/promotion, membership to corporate clubs) that could be related to the phenomenon of empowerment;

To explore the practices that are associated with affirmative action programmes;

To describe empirically the experiences of African managers in affirmative action programmes;

To establish an organisational cultural tradition in the context of advancement;

To establish the perceptions of power and influence within organisations (where is power located?);

To establish the perceptions of the African managers' own power and influence within the employing organisations.

## 3. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research will be guided by the following questions:

- Where are Africans located within the managerial echelons?
- What organisational climate factors within affirmative action settings empower/disempower African managers?
- What factors account for the objectively slow pace of affirmative action programmes?

#### 4. **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Some terms used in this field have been either controversial or used in more than one way. The author believes it necessary to define such terms as they will be used in this study.

##### 4.1 **African**

It is recognised that many white people in South Africa describe themselves as Africans. However to avoid confusion white South Africans are referred to in this report as whites and black South Africans either as Africans or blacks. "Black" will thus only refer to Africans.

##### 4.2 **Empowerment**

For the purposes of this research, empowerment will refer to a long-term and continuing process of development through which individuals become more able to influence those people and organisations that affect their lives and those they care about (Vanderslice, 1984). It is a process of taking increasingly greater charge of one's self and one's life (Wiggill, 1991). It thus implies access to and control of resources. Affirmative action is thus a means of empowering blacks both to develop the skills and abilities as demanded by the high level positions and successfully to take control of resources.

Since the definition of empowerment is still evolving and a general understanding of it is still lacking, the definition offered here should be viewed as tentative.

##### 4.3 **Affirmative Action**

In this report, affirmative action refers to a pro-active, conscious effort to redress disadvantages of the past (Wingrove, 1993) and to increase the representation and participation of marginalised groups (like blacks and women) in managerial positions at the workplace. It is a process designed to achieve equal opportunity and equality among people of different races, gender and other groups. In order to achieve this goal, the barriers in the workplace which restrict employment advancement and opportunities "are systematically eliminated," to achieve individual empowerment (IDASA, 1995).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POWER, POWERLESSNESS AND EMPOWERMENT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of the phenomenon of power would appear to be self - evident. Whether it be applied to nations, states, organisations or individuals, the notion has permeated the public consciousness, and intellectual discussions on the topic continue to proliferate (Miller, 1987).

Although a number of writers ( Bierstedt, 1950; Cartwright, 1959; Wrong, 1968/79; Korpi, 1974; Natemeyr, 1975; Clark, 1977; Clary, 1977; Poole, 1978; Hill, 1980; Hersey and Blanchard, 1982; Mintzberg, 1983; Kakabadse and Parker, 1984; Cavanaugh, 1984; Browning, 1989; Hasenfed and Chester, 1989; Ng, 1990) have attempted to clarify the meaning of the concept and propose its theoretical foundations, research in this field still appears to be confusing.

For instance, the focus for psychologists has been the ability of individuals to exercise authority over others; and within that problem to look out for personality traits and capacities for them to be decisive and powerful. For industrial psychologists and sociologists the focus has been on organisational dynamics, roles and functions; finally, for social scientists in general the focus has been on the broader social structure.

In a study of this nature where seemingly "powerless" black people are cast in organisational settings that they had very little to do with in the first place, in a society that is busy changing the confusion associated with conceptions of power, the shifting of levels of analysis needs some elaboration.

## 2. CONCEPTUALISING POWER

### 2.1. Introduction

In the following pages I will attempt to give a background to the discussion of "power" in social science in order to arrive at a more satisfactory way of operationalising the concept for the study.

#### 2.1.1 **Power as an Individual's Capacity**

This view treats power as an individual's ability to influence others (Etzioni, 1961), or to change others' behaviour (Weber, 1948; Biersted, 1950; Dahl, 1957; Clark, 1968). The definitions implicitly treat power as a personality trait (Mc Clelland, 1970) or as an acquired skill. The approach thus centres around the importance of the individual as a catalyst in the manifestation of power (Hillenbrand, 1949; Seeman, 1959; Guardini, 1961; Votav, 1966; Wrong, 1968; Chein, 1970; Wrong, 1979; Hill, 1980; Hasenfed and Chester, 1980; Hersey and Blanchard, 1982; Kakabadse, 1984; Miller, 1987). According to these writers, power has no reality unless there is human activation and involvement.

The approach acknowledges the fact that one's personal characteristics can be a source of power. For instance, if one is articulate, domineering, physically imposing or in possession of that mystical quality called charisma, one holds personal characteristics that may be used to get others do what one wants.

Such "individualistic" notions of power have been refined further: French and Raven (1959) identify five bases of power - what the power holder has that gives him/her power, namely "coercive" power, "reward" power, "expert" power, "legitimate" power and "referent" power.

However much one refines such qualities or capacities, Robbins (1991) contends, they confuse bases of power with sources of power. According to Robbins (1991) bases are what the power holder controls and sources refer to how the person comes to control the bases of power; they are therefore where power is located, rather than who wields it. It is a characteristic broader than individuals, or as social psychologists insist, an interpersonal characteristic.

### 2.1.2 The interpersonal definitions of power

Typically, the scholars who take this position believe that the consideration of power as a personal attribute constitutes a major flaw in power research (Emerson, 1962). Dornbusch and Scott (1975) maintain it is always a simplification to speak only of an individual's power, and to do so is to court danger, Clark (1974) and Bell (1975) both stipulate that a power act requires the presence of at least two actors, and Koehler *et al.*, (1976) view power as an "inherent" quality of that interaction.

The definition of power as a property of interpersonal relationships thus holds that a person only has power with respect to other individuals in specific relationships (Emerson, 1962; Clark, 1974; Bell, 1975; Dornbusch and Scott, 1975; Pfeffer, 1981). Adding to this observation, other researchers (Cartwright, 1959; Dansereau *et al.*, 1975; Yukl, 1981) take a perspective that focuses on dyadic processes and perceptions rather than on the qualities of one person. The point that is emphasised is the relation of dependence between the participants.

Furthermore, relationships of power however "interpersonal" are not operating in undefined spaces but within organisations: factories, bureaucracies, schools, congregations, clubs, voluntary associations with their own specific rules, regulations and structures.

### 2.1.3 Organisational level definitions of power

In organisations, social theorists insist that the relationship between individuals is transactional. Central to this framework is the "cost" involved in maintaining power and how that affects the behaviour of the power holder. Not only is the possession of resources important; the value of those resources to the power holder also has to be considered. Resources are often scarce and individuals cannot possess everything they want. As a result people are often forced into a choice situation where one valued resource must be given up or exchanged in order to obtain another. The manifestation of power is inherent in this exchange.

Breed and Homans (in Cavanaugh, 1984) emphasise the active involvement and participation of actors in the improvement of their quality of work life (QWL). Adding to this Salanik and Pfeffer, 1974; Burt, 1977; Mintzberg, 1983; Cavanaugh 1984) state that actors in this relationship are purposive in that they use their control of resources in order to improve their individual well-being.

Within an organisational setting, a powerful individual is the one who "has the ability to get things done" (Kanter, 1977a :166), and this ability largely comes from an understanding of the environment. It is partly for this reason that Kotter (1978) and Robbins (1991) characterise effective managers as those who understand their organisational environments so perfectly that they are able to use different types of power appropriately to achieve the desired outcomes. In all institutions there are mechanisms of how power or powerlessness is developed, "defended" and maintained. In other words, an Industrial or Organisational Psychologist has to borrow heavily from Sociology and Political Science before he or she can return to the primary focus of the individual and individual capacities.

## 2.2 The Mechanism of Power

There are three perspectives of broader socio-political power which impact on this study. I will summarise the first two and discuss the third in their schematic succession before I return to their impact on this study. The first perspective is based on a traditional pluralist approach; the second is essentially that put forward by Bachrach and Baratz (1962); the third was developed by Lukes (1974).

### 2.2.1 The one-dimensional approach

The one-dimensional approach to power was essentially developed by Polsby (1959) and Dahl (1969). The approach is historically rooted in Weber's (1948) sociological concept of power. Its assumption is that power is exercised in direct, observable conflict over issues recognised as relevant.

In this view, with its emphasis on observable conflict in decision-making arenas, power may be understood primarily by looking at who prevails in bargaining over the resolution of key issues.

### 2.2.2 The two-dimensional approach

In this approach Schattschneider (1960) questions the one-dimensional approach for blaming the victim and introduces a concept, later developed by Bachrach and Baratz (1962) as power's second face, by which power is exercised not just upon participants within the decision-making process but also toward the exclusion of certain participants and issues altogether.

The approach relates to the concept of detailed and general control. General control can be retained by the limitation on people's access to any real decision-making while seemingly satisfying people by increasing their personal detailed control. The end result is no real shift in power balance.

It is evident from the two dimensional approaches that their explanation of power is limited. Luke's (1974) power theory seems promising here (third dimension), as it shifts away from mere decision-making to the actual content of the relationship as defined by the participants. It is process-oriented and focuses on change. The theory leaves room for combining both the structural and personal aspects of a relationship.

### 2.2.3 The three-dimensional approach

The three-dimensional approach examines ways in which potential issues are often kept out of consideration. It also includes latent conflict which consists of a contradiction between the interests of the power holders and the real interest of those they exclude from decision-making.

In putting forward his conception of power (Lukes, 1974:34) argues that "A" exercises power over "B" when "A" affects "B" in a manner contrary to "B's" interests. The means by which "A" may do so go significantly beyond those allowed within the first two approaches.

First, the powerful influence, shapes or determines the very wants of the powerless, thus preventing the relatively powerless from effectively raising certain issues. Additionally, their (powerless) conceptions of the issues change altogether. Secondly, this may happen in the absence of observable conflict, which may have been successfully averted, though there must be latent conflict which consists, Lukes (1974:38) argues, in a contradiction in the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude. Thirdly, the analysis of power must avoid the individualistic, behavioural confines of the one-dimensional and to some extent the two-dimensional approaches. It must allow for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions (Lukes, 1974:24).

According to Gaventa (1980) if the power amongst the leaders produces a consciousness of power that is reinforcing to the drive of control in the powerful, the powerlessness of the non-elite may also produce a consciousness of powerlessness that is reinforcing to the consciousness of the led.

Admittedly, there is little interconnection between the three approaches and later the three dimensions of power; nor is there enough theoretical relationship between the person and the constraining, organisational environment. Each outlined theory deals effectively with a different level of power and less so with the links between the individual and his or her "interactivity". The closest to this is Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration which deals with the bases of power (1968). This theory is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

### 2.3 Giddens' Conception of Power

Giddens (1968) attempts to resolve some of the controversies involved in the debates about power by means of his theory of structuration. This section does not discuss the whole theory but focuses on the author's notions of power.

Giddens' conception of power has the following five dimensions:

- Power is integral to social relations. Power is implicated at all levels of social life, from "global cultures and ideologies" all the way down to the "most mundane levels of interactions" (Giddens, 1968:113). According to Giddens, the analysis of power is not limited to social institutions or political collectivities, but can also take a face-to-face encounter as its starting point.
- Power is relational, involving relations of dependence and autonomy.

Giddens (1968:93) locates power in a relationship between actors, whereby it can be "harnessed to actors" attempts to get others to comply with their wants. To this end, resources and skills are mobilised by actors to accomplish their respective goals or influence the course of events in a desired direction. Unfortunately, members do not have equal access to resources for effecting the outcome of the interaction. Resources are asymmetrically distributed in accordance with structures of domination.

Despite this asymmetry, however, power relations are always reciprocal, involving some degree of autonomy and dependence in both directions. The author thus argues that investigating power will therefore also involve uncovering the "dialectic of control": how the less powerful manage resources in such a way as to exert control over the more powerful in established power relationships (Giddens, 1984:374).

- Power is enabling as well as constraining. In many of the contexts of everyday life, power does go hand-in-hand with structured forms of domination. Actors do not simply intervene in the course of events; they also try to exercise control over one another. This is accomplished by means of sanctions which are structurally available. By means of sanctioning processes, some actors can restrict the activities of other actors or get them do things that they might not normally have done under other circumstances.

Sanctions are not only restrictive, however. They can be enabling as well, inducing actors to engage in specific activities. In fact, sanctions are the very means by which social interaction comes to be constituted as orderly and "normal". Power is also involved in the very constitution of social life, making it productive, enabling and even positive.

Any analysis of power, then, will entail sorting out both dimensions and showing how power is connected to constraint and enablement in specific instances of social interaction.

- Power is processual. Power is exercised as a process, part and parcel

of the perpetual flux of situated practices of social actors. Structured relations of power involving domination and subordination are produced and reproduced through these practices. Power is thus exercised as members reflexively monitor their interaction and enjoy skills and resources in flexible, on-the-spot and, above all, habitual ways in order to gain control over the encounter. This conception of power focuses on how actors routinely construct, maintain, but also change and transform their relations of power.

- Power is intrinsic to human agency. In its most general sense power is agency. It is the "can" which mediates the desired or intended outcomes of social actors and the actual realisation of these outcomes in their daily social practices. It is also the "could have done otherwise" which is implicated in every situation, even the most restrictive and oppressive (Giddens, 1968:11). By linking power to agency, the possibility is rejected that social actors are ever completely governed by social forces. If this is so, compliance is thus often the result of a decidedly rational assessment of the situation and the viable alternatives; it does not automatically entail agreement.

In conclusion, Giddens' conception of power is suited to a micro-analysis of power. It does not treat power as straight-forward, a top-down aspect of structure or merely as a mechanism of repression. Far from being a matter of openly authoritarian forms of control, power can also be enabling or productive. Power is regarded as mundane, processual and multidimensional, whereby relations of power involving domination and subordination are constructed in the course of interaction by means of the same reflexive procedures employed by actors to structure or sustain any situation. It therefore allows me to focus on the "micro-sources" of power that are within the reach of individuals without losing the broader themes of control, and "structuration".

## 2.4 Sources of Power

Power may be derived from sources inherent in the structure of the society, the organisation, from interpersonal relationships, or from the characteristics of the individual. This parallels the proposed definition of power and the domain of the theoretical position of this research.

#### 2.4.1 Societal sources

The structure of the broader society incorporates several potential sources of power. The socialisation process may have a primary impact on race and gender differences in power by directly influencing factors related to power at other levels. For instance, race and gender-role socialisation may entail sex-typing of positions, specialities and departments within organisations, which in turn are linked with power. Similarly, race and gender-role socialisation forms a basis for sex-role stereotypes held by individuals involved in selection and placement within organisations (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). These factors can have an indirect impact in that blacks and women may be placed in specialist positions and female-typed positions, which may in turn reinforce the race and gender-typing of departments within organisations.

Another source of power is the distribution of income and wealth as crucial indices of power inequalities in societies. For instance, the highest-ranking positions in society are seen to be the most powerful ones and those which convey the best rewards (Ng, 1980). Similarly, a frequently used index of the power of trade unions is their ability to gain particular economic rewards for their members despite managerial hostility (Poole, 1978).

Additionally, the social origins of the members of the main social, political and economic elites may be a source of power. The basic assumption here is that if particular elites continue to attract members from those of privileged birth, this may be taken as some indication of their significance in the power structure of any given society (Poole, 1978).

Another source of power is the formal pattern of control within particular societies, communities and organisations. This brings us closer to the

question of worker participation and control of these formal structures. Control over production systems is seen as a fundamental basis of class rule.

#### 2.4.2 Organisational sources *- position power*

A primary source of influence in an organisation is derived from position power (Yukl, 1981) which is integral to the individual's formal role. It includes control over resources, rewards and punishments, information, the work environment, and work procedures. Of the five bases of power proposed by French and Raven (1959), three concern the position in the organisation: reward and coercive power stem from having the resources to reward and punish others; legitimate power is based on formal authority.

Most writers on the phenomenon of power as it applies to industrial relations agree that its principle manifestations are participation and control (Poole, 1978; Espinosa and Zimbalist, 1978; Jain, 1980; Greenberg, 1986). Indeed, workers' participation is viewed as the principle means of obtaining greater control by workers over several aspects of their working lives and in so doing augment their power vis-a-vis that of management. Poole further argues that participation is the offspring of deeper latent processes and of the values about participation which obtain at any given point in time in societies and organisations.

### 2.4.3. Interpersonal relationships

One source of power in a dyadic relationship is personal power, or informal power based on expertise, attractiveness, and charisma (Yukl, 1981). It involves influence through rational persuasion, faith, and personal identification. This type of power seems to gain importance at higher levels in the organisational hierarchy (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1974; Pfeffer, 1981). It corresponds in some ways with French and Raven's (1959) referent power, which is based on identification.

Interpersonal sources of power can be described in terms of the direction of influence. In a superior-subordinate dyad, power is traditionally seen as flowing downwards, with the superior exerting the influence. An alternative view pictures power as reciprocal, with the subordinate also exerting upward influence (Yukl, 1981). Similarly, lateral or horizontal power involves influence over peers. Downward power may depend upon the individual's upward and downward power (Spekman, 1979) and upon subordinates' upward power. Upward, downward, and lateral power may be seen as combining to influence an individual's total personal power.

### 2.4.4. Individual sources

Sources of power independent of the job derive from individual dispositions and skills. One such source is political skill, the ability to accurately diagnose and understand processes that underlie power in an organisation (Clary, 1977; Pfeffer, 1981). Furthermore, skilful presentation of the self may augment objective power through perceived power.

Another personal quality related to power is expert power, which is based on a person's perceived knowledge and expertise (French and Raven, 1959). Expert power and political skill are based upon perceptions, including self-perceptions. These individual qualities may be critical for the development of interpersonal power and for the effective use of organisational power.

## 2.5. The Working Definition of Power

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For the purposes of this research therefore, power is defined as influence by one person over others stemming:

- (a) from a position in an organisation,
- (b) from access and control of resources,
- (c) from interpersonal relationships and
- (d) from an individual.

This "influence" is positively or negatively related to "sources" and "resources". Similarly, this influence has a powerful effect upon the consciousness of the influence of the powerful and it influences the very wants of the powerless and their conceptions of the issues.

Power can be categorised as objective or perceived (Kaplowitz, 1978). A person can have objective control over organisational resources or rewards, which may or may not be perceived by self or others. This distinction is important, because racial as well as gender stereotypes may lead people to perceive blacks and women as having less power than they actually have (Kanter, 1977a; van Rooyen, 1989). However, certain mechanisms can be used not only by the actors to produce, maintain, reproduce but also negotiate, change and transform their relations of power.

In a study that involves a group that is relatively powerless - black managers, it makes sense to clarify the concept of powerlessness as a condition from which empowerment evolves. What then is powerlessness?

### 3. ON POWERLESSNESS

Seeman (1959) views powerlessness as the expectation by the individual that his or her own behaviour can not determine the outcome he or she seeks. The author's view is quite useful in framing this discussion. More specifically, the sense of powerlessness is an attitude of being which incorporates past experience, ongoing behaviour and continuing cognition. While not seen as unilaterally imposed on the individual by his or her environment, Seeman (1959) views it as an experience embedded in and reinforced by the fabric of social institutions (like schools, church, employment and government). Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) opportunity theory, Lewin's (1951) notion of the culture of poverty and Seligman's (1975) notion of learned helplessness, are all reflective of this condition. A well established consequence of such conditions is entrapment in the cycle of victimisation (Jacobson and Mc Garth (1983).

Freire's (1970, 1990) conceptions also help in clarifying the concept. In his view, the individual alienates him or herself from participation in the construction of social reality. Powerlessness, for Freire, results from passive acceptance of oppressive norms by surrendering to the culture of silence.

In sum, the sense of powerlessness is a construction of continuous interaction between the person and his or her environment. It combines an attitude of self-blame, a sense of generalised distrust, a feeling of alienation from resources for social influence, an experience of economic vulnerability and a sense of hopelessness in socio-political struggles.

Given the topic of this research and the characteristics of this sample - black managers who have some authority "albeit limited," the question of powerlessness does not become as important as that of empowerment in their development at the workplace. The issue of this related concept will be addressed later after the discussion of the theoretical assumptions of this research.

#### 4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THIS WORK

Basically four interrelated assumptions account for the relative powerlessness of black managers in South African white-controlled organisations in the private sector. These are as follows:

- The historical relative deprivation of some groups as a result of race, class and gender oppression leads to power relations which account for the relative powerlessness of the black managers.

Although class can throw some light on understanding the experiences of black managers in South African organisations, power inequalities are structured along racial lines, therefore, are more visible than would have been the case had the lines been different. Adding to the notion of race at the workplace, Nolutshungu (1983) contends that in South Africa race is actually a qualification for entry into economic power, a relationship which he regards as a symbiotic one between the economy and the polity. The dynamic interplay between race and class, however, does not lend itself to a structural analysis of different groups in this country. However, it remains a fact that power cannot be analysed without reference to race, class and gender.

South Africa has a patriarchal structure with economic as well as political power being controlled by a few white men (SAIRR, 1988/89; CSS, 1991). Different groups are thus "oppressed" differently according to class, race and gender.

Although race is the main theme of this position, gender cuts across the variables of race and class, thus compounding the situation for women. Male domination explains the relatively poor representation of women within the managerial echelons of organisations, their subordination as well as the gender awareness (a new trend) of this new breed.

The experiences of black managers (men and women) in the social and political terrain are similar in a number of ways: they have been affected by disenfranchisement, poor education, poor health facilities and forced removals. However, there are also important differences. The differential experiences of men and women, blacks and whites may thus be correlated with the accumulation of power between these groups (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989) - an argument which will be pursued in the next paragraphs.

Women are largely socialised to take primary responsibility for domestic work and child care (reproductive roles, largely unpaid) and thus are "dependents" of men (Moser, 1989/93; Murthy, 1993). They may be expected by others or by themselves to enter the labour market on a temporary basis. Their careers may be seen as supplementary to those of men. Furthermore, sex-role stereotypes may work against them in the process of recruitment and selection for jobs (Erwee, 1989; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). This does not mean that they are not affected by racial discrimination as well.

A different picture emerges for men, who are socialised to be involved in paid jobs and productive roles (Moser, 1993; Murthy, 1993) to be breadwinners, and take roles of relative responsibility and accountability in society - starting from their immediate families out to other social institutions like the church and the place of work.

Adding to the above assertions is the observation that although affirmative action programmes were intended to impact on all blacks, practically these focused largely on black men (SAIRR, 1988/89; CSS, 1991; Human, 1991). Subsequently, because men have been relatively long in the field of work in commerce and industry, they "have outgrown the stigma of being black," (my opinion). Women as a new breed in the field are still subjected to experiences similar to those experienced by men in the early seventies, when the black advancement programmes were first introduced in such settings. They are thus still subjected to window-dressing positions, stereotyping and non-acceptance in informal networks (Wella, 1983; Charoux, 1990; Human, 1991), all of which make entry as well as adaptation to the world of work relatively more difficult for them than for their male counterparts.

Due to the above-stated reasons the majority of professional and management jobs are held by whites and men (SAIRR, 1988/89; CSS, 1991). As such, any observed power differences between black and white men and women reflect a history of a number of "small" influences in their experiences (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). Racial and gender differences in power thus seem to reflect divergent paths-to-power traversed by different racial as well as gender groups during their developmental and career transitions. For blacks and women the path may contain impediments and barriers. In contrast, the path-to-power for whites and men may contain few obstacles that derive from their race and gender. It may actually contain sources of support unavailable to blacks and females.

Furthermore, because men and women play different roles in our society, they often have differential access to and control of resources and thus different interests and needs in terms of training and development for participatory skills and thus empowerment (Moser, 1989; Murthy, 1993). For this reason, when identifying and implementing training programmes it may be useful to desegregate the groups on the basis of race and gender.

To this end, Murthy (1993) suggests that paying attention to empowerment implies a recognition that all participants enter in joint activities from strength or power. The power imbalances between black and white, men and women should thus be addressed as part of any or empowering strategy (Murthy, 1993).

Furthermore, if the above argument is correct it suggests that strategies for empowerment in organisations that work effectively for whites and men may not work for blacks and women and vice versa. Also, differences in terms of power for blacks and whites, men and women cannot be studied at a single point in time because such groups are not comparable without taking account the development of their careers (Ragins and Sandstrom, 1989).

Finally, a theory of power relevant to less powerful groups must incorporate mechanisms for change (Gaventa, 1980). This is due to the fact that for those groups in society whose relative powerlessness is related to immediately recognisable physical attributes (race, gender and physical ability), it is not enough to strive for individual power. Individual power cannot automatically enable such groups to be fully integrated with the powerful group as their actions are interpreted and valued in ways different from similar actions by members of the powerful group. According to Gaventa (1980) until they change the power relation itself, they will continue to experience the effects of inequality. The theory of power that is relevant must thus be process-oriented - a theory that does justice to the ways in which people involved in a power relationship experience it, as well as the ways in which the power differential is maintained or changed (Gaventa, 1980; Dickens and Dickens, 1982; Davis, 1991). It must include the process by which relations involving domination and subordination are produced, reproduced, negotiated and transformed. Negotiation must be between two parties who both have access to some resources, albeit unequal. This requires, among other things, being particularly alert to how minorities exercise control even when resources are limited or when they do not, when all is said and done, come out on top (Davis, 1991).

Luke's (1974) power theory seems promising here as a starting point since it shifts away from mere decision-making to the actual content of the relationships as defined by the participants. It is process-oriented and focuses on change. The theory leaves room for combining both the structural and personal aspects of a relationship.

- Power within the job situation derives from multiple levels, including the inherent power of the formal position in the organisation, interpersonal relationships and individual characteristics.

At the individual level, potential resources include skills and personality traits. At the interpersonal level resources include peer relationships, mentor relationships, supervision that allows autonomy and supportive subordinate relations. At the organisational level resources include position power and control over organisational assets. These levels represent embedded systems, with events happening at one level influencing those at another level (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989).

For instance, position power is inherent in the organisational structure but also depends upon the development and use of individual skills and expertise. Individual power depends on the power of a formal position, interpersonal relationships and perceptions. Organisational power may come from individual power developed through informal networks (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989).

In response to the 1973 Durban labour strikes, capital in South Africa embarked upon a programme of black advancement in commerce and industry. This was meant to absorb blacks into professional and managerial positions, particularly in the sphere of industrial relations where they would be best qualified to deal with labour problems. Later, because of the growth in black consumer power stimulated by rising wages, black professionals were appointed into marketing and sales positions. However, this strategy only catered for a few graduates. Consequently, black managers are still predominantly in personnel departments (Nzimande, 1991; Human, 1994). Such departments have less power in terms of control over resources critical for the organisation's survival and control of information with the potential of reducing uncertainty facing the organisation (Pfeffer and Salancik, (1978). Furthermore, as African personnel practitioners their jobs are structured and closely controlled, with variations of course, by management (Nzimande, 1986; Negota, 1987).

Additionally, since black managers have been "co-opted" by white management, such co-optation creates status incongruity and rank disequilibrium, both of which militate against their development of power (Zulu, 1991). In status incongruity the acquired status simply does not carry power commensurate with it, whereas in rank disequilibrium there is no equality among incumbents falling within the same rank particularly between black and white.

Because of the structural as well as political determinants of access to decision-making and control of resources within organisations, empowerment in white-controlled organisations seems to have taken political dimensions in favour of whites. Most meaningful decisions are thus made by the most senior managers (who happen to be white) in powerful departments (finance, production and marketing).

The interrelatedness of the levels (individual, interpersonal and organisational) calls for a systemic study and analysis of power within organisations. It will be argued in this report that individual, group and organisational processes are all important areas of activity. However, because power involves influencing key persons (actors) within an organisation, the process of political influence is better examined at the individual level, exploring perceptions of the "key actors." The focus is on the recurring and non-recurring patterns of behaviour of individuals and their attempts to influence others through interpersonal interaction which is also largely influenced both by organisational structure and culture.

- Perceptions are critical for the development of power.

One key influence on the perception of power is stereotypes. Distortions inherent in the process may be intensified for people who are visibly in the minority because belonging to a minority group increases the saliency of their performance. Additionally, stereotypes contribute to the self-perceptions of the group to which they are directed. These groups are therefore conscientised about their powerlessness and it thus becomes self-fulfilling (Gaventa, 1980).

Such distorted perceptions can direct attention to the uniqueness of such individuals, and can create token dynamics exaggeration of differences and social isolation. Further, deviation from the "majority" group can also confer a lower status on "tokens," and because status is correlated with authority and power "tokens" may experience less power (Van Rooyen, 1989).

Additionally, distorted perceptions may influence interpersonal relationships that are critical for the development of power by decreasing access of the "minorities" to intra-organisational networks (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). Such networks may be a source of power because they disseminate information about the job itself.

Finally, since individuals act on their interpretations of reality rather than on reality itself, it is clear that perception must be a critical determinant of the dependent variables of this research.

- The analysis of power will be inadequate without consideration of the notion of organisational climate.

Guion (in Stringer and Litwin, 1968) sees this concept as referring to a set of measurable properties of the environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the people who work in that environment and is assumed to influence their motivation and behaviour. These perceived properties which influence behaviour either positively or negatively are suggested by Stringer and Litwin (1968) as the following:

structure; responsibility; reward; risk; warmth; support; standards; conflict and identity.

These authors view the employee's perception of such factors within the company as affected by innumerable internal and external factors, as well as the company's basic functioning.

In terms of the South African business, Dunette (1976) quoting Nasser (1975) indicates that the major basis of organisational climate consists of various combinations of the following factors:

organisational culture and tradition; local business orientation and expectations; managerial style; management versus employee needs and goals; internal organisational pressures; socio-economic and political factors.

Schultz and Schultz (1994) admit that this concept is not easy to define such that some industrial psychologists use the term climate and culture interchangeably. However, others argue that climate is the surface manifestation of culture. The authors conclude that organisational climate is what we perceive when we observe the way the company functions. It is this definition that will be adhered to in the

course of this discussion

Organisational climate is, and will continue to be a critical variable in organisational performance, because it governs the lives of all those who operate within the constraints of its framework. Authors on affirmative action agree that organisational climate factors should be very important considerations in the process of empowerment given the diversity of the present workforce (Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Human, 1991; Charoux, 1992).

To conclude, all forms of management within organisations involve power. For this reason, black managers have access to some resources and are involved in some decision-making processes. However, given the legacy of the past in this country, power in the private sector is still largely controlled by whites. In a study which involves a group that is relatively powerless, therefore, the question about "empowerment" becomes important and needs to be clarified. What then is empowerment?

## 5. EMPOWERMENT : Its Nature

Empowerment has become a widely used term in organisational sciences (for example: Kanter, 1983; Rappaport, 1981; Vanderslice, 1984; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988; Browning, 1989; Charoux, 1990; Gandz, 1990; Moerdyk and Coldwell, 1990; Schoeman, 1990; Bruniquel, 1991; Wiggill, 1991). It is variously used to denote a process, a psychological state, a social condition and a perspective or world view (see for example: Freire, 1970, 1971, 1990; Solomon, 1976; Rappaport, 1981; Kieffer 1984). At this early stage of its usage empowerment has no agreed-upon definition. Rather, the concept is one of the hottest human resources buzzwords, and is often used loosely to capture a family of somewhat related meanings. For example, the word has been used to describe a variety of specific interventions, as well as presumed effects of those interventions on employees. There is general agreement amongst authors writing about empowerment that it is a difficult term to define (Rappaport, *et al.*, 1984; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988; Charoux, 1990; Moerdyk and Coldwell, 1990; Schoeman, 1990). This, they argue, is due to the fact that the concept takes different forms in different people and contexts.

Kieffer (1984) and Rappaport, *et al.*, (1984) argue that the term refers to a longitudinal dynamic of development and to attainment of insights and abilities best characterised as participatory competence. They conceive empowerment as having the ability to incorporate the following three major intersecting aspects:

- the development of a more positive self-concept or a sense of self competence;
- the construction of a more critical or analytical understanding of the surrounding social and political environment; and
- the cultivation of individual and collective resources for social and political action.

Despite the fact that a general definition of empowerment is still "evolving" (Vanderslice, 1984), authors on empowerment have identified several interrelated although not necessarily sequential actions that contribute to the concept (Freire, 1970; Gaventa, 1980;). These are as follows:

- Recognise and value one's skills, knowledge and resources.
- Develop additional skills, obtain more knowledge and gain more access to resources to interact more forcefully with people and institutions.
- Broaden interpersonal networks to overcome feelings of individual or group isolation.
- Develop personal beliefs that one's needs and opinions are legitimate and that it is legitimate to voice them.
- Become more involved in successful interactions with one's environment to reinforce one's effectiveness and self confidence.

Empowerment implies that individuals are in control of their lives (Rappaport, 1981; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988; Wilson and Mamphela, 1989). To explain this concept further Wilson and Ramphela (1989) differentiate between empowerment and co-optation. In the latter, those who are poor, helpless and previously disadvantaged are rendered even more dependent and powerless. Affirmative action programmes should thus not aim at co-opting black managers but empower them.

Adding to this assertion, Thomas and Velthouse (1990:6) conceive of empowerment as referring to "giving power to," "to authorise," "to energise." They use the concept to refer to the motivational content of a new paradigm of management - management that encourages commitment, risk-taking and innovation. Adding to this Conger and Kanungo (in Schoeman, 1990) define the concept in terms of motivational processes in employees. Their approach allows researchers to study the empowering effects of different interventions, while being more explicit about what those effects are. Bandura (1977) defines the term as referring to feelings of self-efficacy.

Within organisational contexts, empowerment means that management shares decision-making or approval authority with employees where traditionally such authority was a managerial prerogative (Gandz, 1990). Also in the work setting, empowerment occurs in situations where "experts" are not the key actors, but employees start to handle and solve their own problems. Participation of employees in their own empowerment is vital in this regard. It is such participation that empowers employees to increase their own control over their own work places. Through such empowerment employees start to improve their social and psychological working conditions or their quality of working life (Q.W.L.).

The above discussion assumes that participation and control are principal manifestations of empowerment. This is in line with the contributions of scholars such as Poole (1978), Ng (1980), Cavanaugh in Kakabadse and Parker (1984), Elden (1986) and Orford (1992).

Additionally, Elden (1986) formulates his meaning of the concept from a study of the Nowergian model of democratisation through participation. Professor Elden argues for a process of empowerment which enables employees to study and change their organisations. This, the author believes, allows empowering participation that enables employees to generate knowledge useful for action through participatory research and change. In such circumstances employees empower themselves through collective efforts to produce new definitions of reality and new possibilities for action. This in turn leads to self-managed learning through changing their own organisations. Employees thus create their own workplace according to their own "local theory". Viewed this way then, participative research appears to be a means of empowerment (Hall, 1975; Poole, 1978; Elden, 1981). Participative research combined with self-managed inquiry emerge as elements of a strategy of empowering participation.

In addition, the developmental perspective establishes the specific importance of time and practice in the evolution of participatory skills. Moreover, people confront the transformative tasks in an environment which historically enforced their political repression and which continues its implicit attempts at subversion of constructive change.

Additionally most authors writing from the developmental perspective agree that the main objective for this process is the attainment of participatory competence (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport *et al.*, 1984; Vanderslice, 1984; Elden, 1986; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989; Freire, 1990).

According to Rappaport *et al.*, (1984), it is thus unrealistic to presume that the cumulative effects of domination can be reversed in any other than a long-term frame of reference. In this regard, Kieffer (1984) suggests a developmental model which could help management in the process of empowering their subordinates. It is, however outside the scope of this thesis to discuss this model.

The hypotheses are detailed overleaf.

## 6. THE HYPOTHESES

This research is guided by the hypotheses that where blacks in managerial positions do not perceive themselves as being central to the decision-making processes within the employing organisations, are in less influential departments and occupy less influential positions, do not know the important people, do not have access and control over valued resources like information and people, they would be expected to feel that they are not participating and not in control over issues in affirmative action settings.

The degree of their relative powerlessness (poor participation and control over issues) will vary with the type of relationship the black manager has with colleagues and the immediate superior, membership in (or its absence) corporate clubs and the level of education. Managers who are less educated, whose relations with colleagues and superiors are strained and those who do not belong to corporate clubs, will feel more disempowered than their counterparts within such environments.

What follows is a graphic presentation of the hypotheses.

FIGURE 1

SUMMARY OF GRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF THE HYPOTHESIS  
HYPOTHESISED RELATIONS IF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES SCORE HIGHLY

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE		DEPENDENT VARIABLE EMPOWERMENT DISEMPOWERMENT
Participation in decision making	Central	+
	Peripheral	-
Departmental influence	Influential	+
	not influential	-
Position power	Powerful	+
	not powerful	-
Awareness	Aware	+
	not aware	-
Superior relationship	Positive	+
	Negative	-
Collegial relationship	Positive	+
	Negative	-
Membership to corporate clubs	Member	+
	not a memebr	-
Educational qualification	High	+
	Low	-

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since this research endeavours to measure perceptions of black managers about aspects of power in the workplace (its nature, its location, its sources and how it can be acquired, negotiated and transformed), it became necessary for the researcher to question the intensity and accuracy of the measurements, in terms of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the concepts. Both *individual* and *context* factors had to be considered, and the instrument/s used had to be sufficiently flexible to produce meaningful answers to questions which would enable the researcher to justify the findings.

Fink & Kosecoff (1985) state that the appropriate analysis method for survey data is totally dependent on who is surveyed, the survey design, and the type of data.

This research was conducted at two levels: at a *preliminary stage* and *survey research stage*. The discussion in this chapter will reflect both levels, beginning with the preliminary research and continuing with the survey research.

#### **2. METHODOLOGY**

##### **2.1 The nature of preliminary research**

In order to get a feel of the problem under study, to check if the survey questions were clear, and that the possible time which would be taken to complete each interview schedule (amongst others), was appropriate, the following procedures were undertaken:

- a. Review of literature pertinent to the topic with a view to building upon the work already done by others.

- b. Experience survey. In this regard, eight individuals with practical experience of the problem were visited by the researcher and the project was broadly discussed.
- c. Pilot study : Interviews with black managers.  
An interview schedule developed by the researcher was administered to black managers, individually, in a face-to-face encounter, by the researcher. To participate in this situation respondents were chosen for their perceived similarities with those who would eventually participate in the survey. Responses to the questions revealed that the interview schedule was workable.

## 2.2 The Survey Research

This section is divided into the universe, the sample, data collection, methodological problems as well as data analysis.

### 2.2.1 The universe

Industry in South Africa is largely concentrated in the country's four major metropolitan complexes, namely: Gauteng region, Western Cape, Durban - Pinetown and Port Elizabeth (Rogerson, 1975). The present study was mainly concentrated in the Durban Metropolitan Area. Practical limitations of time and finance made this necessary. However, since most studies on black managers are conducted in the Gauteng region and not much is done in the Greater Durban area, Durban findings would be more practical and applicable to Durban organisations. After all, Durban is Kwazulu Natal's largest industrial centre and thus has the greatest numerical strength of Urban Africans in the province. This may be due to the fact that after the Gauteng complex, Durban is the second largest industrial complex in the country. The choice of the metropolitan area is therefore justified, since drawing a sample with varied perceptions which are representative of the larger industrial complexes would not be a problem.

## 2.2.2 The sample

- ***The target population***

The target population for this research is black managers in the employ of white-controlled organisations in the private sector.

- ***Selection of the sample***

In order to control the main variable under observation - perceptions about power - the author decided on managers who belonged to at least one association that is perceived (by managers) to play the role of social as well as psychological support through networking between its membership. In so doing the author operated under the assumption that such networks are a source of power largely by disseminating information and being supportive to its members (Brass, 1985; Kanter, 1977a; Kotter, 1978). Such associations were The Black Management Forum (BMF), The Association for the Advancement of Black Accountants in Southern Africa (ABASA), and The Institute For Personnel Management (IPM). To achieve the goal of sample selection, the following procedures were undertaken:

1. The lists of the members of each association were collected from the secretaries. In the list obtained from the BMF were 400 names, 80 were received from ABASA, and 10 from the IPM listing. The total number of names was 490 and the membership overlapped to some extent. Contained in each list were surnames, initials, work, and home telephone numbers, occupations and job titles of each member.
2. The names were alphabetically organised in each list according to surname, by the author. Those which appeared in more than one list were selected only once.

3. Through systematic random sampling every third element of the total list was chosen for inclusion in the sample. First of all a random number between one and three was selected - this was three. Three was then included in the sample plus every third element following it. Babbie (1992) refers to this method as a systematic sample with a random start. The sample size totalled one hundred and sixty. Due to the fact that, for some reasons (like appearing more than once on the list, transfer to other towns and attending workshops elsewhere) some potential respondents were not available for participation in the study, the sample size remains at 100.

▪ **The characteristics of the sample.**

Managers who qualified to participate in this research were those who:

- ◇ are men and women employed in the private sector in the Greater Durban Metropolitan Area;
- ◇ are employed in white-owned organisations the examples of which are : manufacturing, marketing, chemical explosives and pharmaceuticals, transport, engineering, and construction.
- ◇ are in the 21-60 year age group;
- ◇ have worked in the private sector for a minimum of five years;
- ◇ are in one of the following departments: personnel, service (grouped as human resource department), finance, marketing and sales, production, technical or engineering.
- ◇ whose employing organisations have a formal commitment to affirmative action at least at policy level.

#### \* **Obtaining access to the sample.**

The entry strategy for this research was consultation with the associations (BMF, ABASA, and IPM) to which managers belonged. The purpose for this was mainly to introduce the project and lobby for support and co-operation. The leaders were met individually and the proposed project was broadly discussed. The areas covered in the discussion were:

- ◇ when the interviews were to be conducted and by whom?
- ◇ who qualified to be interviewed;
- ◇ where the interviews were to be conducted;
- ◇ the duration of each interview as well as
- ◇ the benefits of the findings to the respondents.

Each association received a formal letter from the author with all the above details, the contents of which was intended to reach all the members of the associations.

#### 2.2.3 **Data collection methods**



In order to get sufficient information about the day-to-day experiences of black people in management positions in organisations, a relatively large sample had to be accessed. Survey research was adopted and the following methods used:

- (a) **An interview schedule. (Refer Appendix 26)**  
A structured interview schedule, developed by the author, was used. This instrument had both *questions* and *statements*. Most questions were closed-ended, where each respondent was asked a question and was then provided with a choice of responses from which to choose the one which best applied to his or her situation. The operationalisation of the questions was guided by the conceptual framework regarding the sources of power and consideration of its multi-dimensional nature in particular.

Essentially there were three types of questions: single response, multiple response, and written response. The questions covered the perceptions of black managers in the following areas:

- ◇ participation or lack of it in decision-making structures at departmental and organisational level;
- ◇ Influence or lack of it, in such decision-making structures;
- ◇ presence or absence of support networks within the employing organisations (corporate clubs) and membership of these;
- ◇ the power of the respondent's position or department within the employing organisation;
- ◇ knowledge of, and access to, important and influential people within the employing organisations;
- ◇ access to, and control of, important organisational resources like information and persons, and finally,
- ◇ perceived relations with subordinates, colleagues and superiors within the employing organisation.

The questionnaire was spread out and uncluttered so as to make it clear to the respondents. In the closed-ended questions, the responses were exhaustive (all possible expected responses included) and largely mutually exclusive (the respondent not made to feel compelled to select more than one). Probes were made use of in eliciting clarity especially to open-ended questions.

Pertaining to *statements*, respondents were given the following options to choose from in a Likert-type measurement scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, not sure. In other instances respondents were asked to assess certain impressions about job situations, and to state how important or unimportant such statements were to people like him/herself. With the five response categories, scores of 1 to 5 were assigned to, taking the direction of items into account (for example, a score of 5 was assigned to "strongly agree" for positive items, and 1 to strongly disagree for negative items, except for the question on participation and control which was reverse scored - with one assigned to very happy and 5 assigned to very unhappy).

✓ (b)

#### Interviewing.

Using the *interview schedule*, the researcher asked questions orally and recorded each respondent's answer. This was done in a face-to-face encounter between the two at the place of work. The aim was to enable each respondent to think accordingly, and to acquire as much data as possible on specific issues of particular importance to the research project at hand. Although this research demanded more than one interviewer (due to a large sample size=100) financial constraints prevented provision of another. The alternative was to post the interview schedule to each respondent for self completion. Due, however, to the advantages of the *interview survey* over the *postal* one (specifically a high response rate of between 80-85 percent, (Babbie 1992)) the researcher preferred to conduct the interviews personally. Indeed, the response was very good. Of all the potential respondents telephoned for interviews, only 6 percent voluntarily decided not to participate. 90 percent of all the questions asked were answered. Those which were not answered were not applicable to the respondents' situation. Each interview lasted for about an hour. All interviews were conducted during the second half of 1994.

## 2.2.4 Methodological problems

Besides the advantages inherent in the methods used this research still has its limitations, which can be summarised as follows:

- ◇ Targeting the associations of black managers limited the sampling frame further in terms of numbers (the population size of black managers). An alternative was to get the list of black managers from the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The purpose of this research, however, necessitated control of certain variables which could have some influence on the perceptions of power, given the possibility that membership to associations might contribute to different perceptions to empowerment.

Although the external validity of the results may be questionable, the fact that all the respondents are managers by definition makes the findings reliable to some extent, although they should be applied to non-members with some caution (refer to methodological problems in chapter 6). Also, from the responses it would seem that there are more similarities than differences with most research findings on black management experiences in white-controlled organisations (refer Innes and Kentridge, 1993; Human, 1994; IDASA, 1995). For this reason, therefore, the results will provide some valuable insights in the process of empowerment of blacks in affirmative action settings.

- ◇ The sampling frame was characterised by under-representation of some sub-samples like occupation (very few managers in production and finance) and gender (very few women in managerial positions). However, by definition subjects interviewed were all managers making generalisations made justifiable.

- ❖ The definition of manager becomes confusing when it applies to blacks as they occupy "specialist" positions, with only black subordinates (Wella, 1983; Negota, 1987; Nzimande, 1991). Also, they feel they do not have authority and accountability that normally goes along with a managerial role. Further, they do not control any budget within their departments. Adding to this, Negota (1987) defines a black manager as a person who not only performs the work of planning, organising and leading, but has under his control white subordinates. Negota strongly argues that the absence of white subordinates in this role disqualifies their position from that of a true manager to a specialist one. Negota's position with regard to the definition of *black manager* could have been adopted were it not for the fact that the sample size was going to be too small to allow for any data analytical procedures. For the sake of progress in attempting to describe the situation of the so-called black managers and avoid such confusion, the researcher targeted individuals who were officially designated *managers* irrespective of their on-the-job responsibilities.
- ❖ The records of names provided by the associations (BMF, IPM and ABASA) were relatively outdated with regard to information required by this research. This is understandable, given the fact that such associations use voluntary administrative assistance. However, with the researcher working full-time on the project it was not an insurmountable problem to update the records by tracing the "missing" members telephonically, then checking and updating their particulars on the lists provided.
- ❖ The choice of method used was quite expensive. It involved telephoning for interviews and travelling to different points to conduct such interviews. As already stated, postal interviews would have been less expensive but given the advantages of survey interviews over the mailed surveys (self-administered ones), the choice of the method is justified.

- ❖ Most questions in the interview schedule did not apply sufficiently well to the situation of black managers in technical fields, like engineering. However, these occupations are still limited in terms of black representation within organisations. For instance, in this sample only 2 percent of the sample were from the technical group. Since the sample interviewed was quite representative, and the questions asked applied very well to 98 percent of the respondents, generalisations made are again justified.
- ❖ Extensive use of closed-ended questions could have biased the results. However, the response categories were exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Also, the fact that respondents had to explain their choice and their comments largely made use of, make the results reliable.
- ❖ Point 2.2.2 reflects a high percentage of potential respondents who did not participate for different reasons (38 percent). If this was so, it could have biased the findings due to the questionable representativeness of the sample to the targeted group. In actual fact only 25 percent of the reflected total could not participate because they appeared more than once on the lists.

Even if the non-participation rate was actually that high, a test of comparison between these groups would have been conducted on fairly superficial characteristics. (like age, gender and educational level). Deeper differences like attitudinal ones (giving more important information for this study) could not have been readily tested (Bryman and Cramer, 1990). Lastly, the study was not intended to give a representative picture of black responses to empowerment, but rather to draw out a broad range of possible facts to empowerment/disempowerment as perceived by black managers. The results are therefore justifiable.

- ❖ Non response could have affected the sample size in relation to the kind of analysis intended to be undertaken. This was anticipated by the researcher and provision was made - hence the initial 160 subjects and the actual sample size of the respondents - 100. For instance, factor analysis needs not less than 100 subjects (Bryman and Cramer, 1990). It, however, remains a fact that the sample size is limited for the multiple comparisons (discussed in chapter 6). Results should

therefore be applied with some caution.

### 2.2.5 Data analysis

All data collected from the survey research was entered on to a computer data base and analysed using the following statistical procedures:

- (a) Frequency distributions as well as frequency histograms to describe the sample.
- (b) Correlational procedures (e.g. Spearman Rank Correlation for ranked data) to make inferences about relationships between variables.
- (c) Factor analysis, to reduce the number of variables into small hypothetical clusters for subsequent analyses.
- (d) Regression analysis, to make some estimates of the values of the dependent variable from the values of the dependent variables to discern to some kind of quantitative relationships between independent and dependent variables.

The following chapter (chapter 4) discusses the results of the interviews.

## CHAPTER 4

### **RESULTS OF THE FOCUSED INTERVIEWS**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Power was conceptualised in Chapter 2, and methodology discussed in Chapter 3. What is required now is to operationalise the concept by empirically testing the perceptions of black managers, i.e. the targeted group, about the concept.

This chapter therefore presents and discusses the results of the focused interview. Group differences and similarities will be seen as trends. Inferences will therefore be treated cautiously. An approach to conducting a statistical evaluation of data will be presented in the Chapter 5.

In the presentation of results, reference will not be made to specific frequency histograms in each case, as this would be unnecessarily tedious. The most important frequency histograms for items in the interview schedule appear in the relevant appendices. Percentages will be brought to their nearest decimal points. Any percentage total which is greater than 100 will indicate that subjects responded more than once to the question.

Results will be presented under three broad headings, corresponding with the definition of power and its major sources in organisations as stated earlier, namely:

- individual factors;
- interpersonal factor, and
- organisational factors.

It should be noted, however, that these headings are not mutually exclusive but overlap to some extent, so that factors related to power at any one level also affect the others.

## 2. INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Differences between individuals in power may be due to characteristics of the individual or to the qualities and experiences that the individual brings to the situation.

This section confines itself to the following individual factors that may contribute to differential power relations at the place of work:

- age;
- educational qualifications;
- total work experience, and
- intra-organisational experience.

### 2.1 Age

A higher percentage (70 percent) of the respondents belong to the early adulthood stage of development (21-40) and a smaller one (30 percent) fall within the middle age stage (41-60) (Lefrancois, 1990), (see Appendix 1). Without undermining the importance of the chronological age view in the explanation of behaviour and development ( Liebert *et al.*, 1977), it is suggested here that the lifespan view of human development is more appropriate in this regard as it recognises the importance of the context - the individual's social environment.

What is evident from the age of respondents is that a higher percentage might have started school in the early 1960s, and continued with their schooling into the 1970s and the 1980s. If educated in South Africa, they may not have escaped the effects of Bantu Education. This period is characterised by the following socio-political events and conditions:

- nine departments of education with disparate funding (black education being the most poorly funded);
- poor laboratory and library facilities in black schools;
- teacher shortage in black schools;
- unqualified and under-qualified teachers in black schools;
- political violence impacting negatively on schooling (contributing to absenteeism, violence in schools and intimidation);
- examination irregularities in black schools;
- poorly motivated staff and students;
- over-crowding in black schools and
- poor matric examination results (Dlamini, 1991).

Given all the above circumstances, it would be expected that only the better or best students would be successful in the examinations. If the sample of this research are successful, this should have raised their self-esteem and confidence in themselves. The opposite should be true for those who were unsuccessful.

On the positive side, the same period is characterised by black pupils' registration in private schools and historically white universities. There is, therefore, a possibility that some of the respondents attended school in such institutions - an experience which could have had an opposite effect to the above in terms of raising one's self esteem.

In the world of work, the same period (1970s and 1980s) coincided with the following reforms:

- disinvestment campaign;
- labour disputes;
- the rise of African trade unionism;
- the emergence of African Personnel Practitioners; and
- the formation of the Black Management Forum (refer Zulu, 1991).

Observing such reforms from a distance (as non-participants) might have raised hopes and future aspirations in terms of relative shifts in power relations. If, when they started employment, they found the situation not as attractive as they anticipated, they may be expected to have felt relatively frustrated. For this reason, it would be helpful not only to take the age variable as a chronological one but also in its context and check its possibility in influencing the respondent's perceptions (Sitas, personal communication, 8 December 1994).

## 2.2 **Educational Qualification**

Most subjects (65 percent) were university graduates with a degree as their minimum qualification; only 35 percent were not graduates (see Appendices 2 and 25 for qualifications and institutions from which respondents graduated). Since top bureaucrats, corporate managers and executives in South Africa are drawn from the ranks of university graduates (Nzimande, 1991) this is a positive finding. It is indicative of potential for training and development in preparation for such positions. In this regard the main caution is the quality of such degrees, given the crises South African black schools and universities have been subjected to since 1976. Of some concern is the fact that African graduates are disproportionately few in the technological and natural science disciplines. As a result their career choices in commerce and industry become relatively restricted to less powerful departments, creating the impression that they are not likely to make irreplaceable contributions to the organisation.

The positive aspect about this scenario (more graduates) is the presence of visible African role models who have a trainable base on which the corporate world may capitalise in terms of rigorous and relevant skills training for specific job demands (technical and managerial competence).

The reliance of the corporate world on university degrees when making appointments for managerial positions is evident in the following comments of one respondent:

At job entry level there is tokenism ... Companies can never compromise their standards. They would rather inflate their entry requirements than lower them. For external recruits a degree is a must for a managerial position... No compromises; just no compromises.

It would seem, therefore, that the minimum educational requirements for a managerial position is a basic degree. Of particular importance for fair employment practices, however, is the predictive value of a basic degree to performance on the job. If such job entry requirements do have a predictive value, the private sector may have to develop strategies on how they can actively participate in and support the process of increasing the pool of African graduates from whom to make their selection. This is especially needed, given the poor socio-economic background of many candidates, and their relatively limited knowledge regarding career options and choices.

### 2.3 **Total work experience**

A higher percentage (54 percent) of respondents worked in commerce and industry for a minimum of 13 years, and a smaller percentage (46 percent) worked for less than 13 years (see Appendix 3).

Of particular significance here is the conspicuous absence of African

managers interviewed in the same metropolitan area, by the same author in the early '80s (Wella, 1983). This situation may be like that for the following reasons. Firstly, some black managers may have moved to larger industrial areas (like Gauteng) - centres with relatively better prospects for advancement. The second possibility could be that some managers have started private consultancies. From the comments of the subjects it emerged that many of their female counterparts were absorbed by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The NGOs have more challenging jobs; they are more gender aware and with them the sky is the limit in terms of one's development. One is not only trained inside this country, but in many others. Besides, one has full accountability over the budget.

The trend indicates that NGOs tend to attract women at managerial levels. It would be interesting to explore the conditions under which such organisations operate as these seem to have potential for job satisfaction. Why such organisations attract women may be partly explained by the nature of what they offer - focused jobs with specific objectives.

#### 2.4 Organisational experience

More respondents (53 percent) have worked within their organisations for three years or less, and a smaller percentage (47 percent) have worked for more than three years in the same organisation (refer Appendix 4). Adding this response to the total work experience, one gets an impression that respondents do not put down roots - they move from company to company possibly, in search of greener pastures. Such a move may be indicative of the fact that they do not deal with conflict; instead, they run away. Whatever the reasons are, the whole exercise may delay the process of the "intermarriage" between the incumbents and the employing organisations. This in turn could adversely affect their upward mobility within organisations. It is normally good human resource practice to promote internally to senior level rather than recruiting from outside. This is in line with manpower succession planning. However, if there are no candidates from within, external recruitment and appointments may be justified.

What follows are comments from a subject in relation to intra-organisational experiences:

Please come and interview me today because next week I will be employed by another company in Johannesburg. ... It is not a transfer, I have resigned. ... Three of us (Africans) have resigned during the same year. If you miss me you have nobody to give you a picture of what is going on here as regards affirmative action!

These are not isolated comments. At another point the same respondent said:

I have a degree and have worked in this company for seven years as a manager [job title] but I am not treated like one in terms of responsibility, authority and accountability ... Its time I moved out ... They take me too much for granted.

It would seem that respondents in this sample do not interpret their intra-organisational experience as part of broader societal processes. They expect different South African companies to give them different treatment in terms of job satisfaction. Research in this area suggests, however, that the experiences of "affirmative groups" are similar in many ways (Wells, 1983; Human, 1986, 1989, 1991 1992; Charoux, 1986; Charoux, 1991). The findings suggest a dynamic interplay between employing organisations and the broader society, and therefore suggests that moving from one company to another may not help the manager in search of greener pastures. They also suggest that organisations do basically have a common tradition although they are unique to to some extent.

### **3. INTERPERSONAL FACTORS**

Relationships with superiors, colleagues, friendship groups and mentors may affect the development of an individual's power in an organisation. Each relationship may present an opportunity to gain a specific resource for power and to capitalise on existing resources. Individuals can, for instance, use

relationships with colleagues to gain access to coalitions and networks; relationships with superiors can allow either autonomy or a mentoring relationship.

This section focuses on relations with superiors, mentors, colleagues and friends at work, and the perceived relevance of such interpersonal relationships to the development of individual power.

### 3.1 **Relations with immediate superiors**

When asked about the type of relationship the respondents had with their superiors, 85 percent perceived it as positive (friendly, co-operative, honest and accepting), 12 percent as lukewarm, 10 percent as difficult to assess, 2 percent perceived no relationship, and 3 percent saw it as negative (unfriendly, unco-operative and tense). (Refer to Appendix 5).

The reasons advanced for a positive relationship were:

- we are both open and frank;
- I have made him realise that he needs me;
- the policy of the organisation is vision-driven;
- he is well-travelled and a good planner;
- because I tolerate his nasty behaviour;
- integrated management practices;
- he supports affirmative action fully;
- we also meet informally after work;
- he depends on me in terms of knowledge;
- I have skills for the job;
- the company culture is supportive of such relationships;
- teamwork;
- he allows for calculated risks; and
- he is accessible and we have open lines of communication.

Reasons for a lukewarm relationship were:

- he withholds important information from me;
- he takes my suggestions as his;
- he is threatened by my qualifications;
- he believes that the finance department belongs to him;
- he does not believe in affirmative action;
- I am not open myself; and
- I do not have confidence in him.

Reasons for relationships seen as "difficult to assess" were:

- he is individualistic by nature but a nice person;
- he is an unpredictable person;
- he talks about my personal issues in public; and
- he is still new.

Reasons for a negative relationship were:

- nepotism - I am not accepted by the whole family at work;
- stereotypes about blacks;
- racism; and
- fear of the unknown.

Where no relationship was perceived, the reason was the fact that the superior was still new on the job.

It would seem that on the whole relationships with superiors were positive. (The respondents' definition of "positive", however, excludes "*honest*" and "*accepting*" since they appear to believe that this is idealistic.) Communication patterns, company policies, management styles, and skills for the job were frequently cited as reasons for respondents generally

positive view.

Employing organisations can capitalise on this positive relationship by making such immediate superiors drivers for affirmative action within departments (Human, 1991). This does not take away the responsibility of top management to monitor and evaluate, to ensure that progress is made and objectives met, more so given the fact that relationships are sometimes perceived to be neither accepting nor honest.

The fact that relations with the superiors are not perceived as honest and accepting, but just positive, may be suggestive of the fact that all is not well. For this reason, positive relations may be for strategic reasons - to get the job done.

But how does a good relationship help in the development of power? The support of a senior member of the organisation is indispensable - s/he can buffer the subordinate from overt or covert discrimination, can mentor and coach, lend legitimacy to the position, and provide guidance and training in the political operation of the organisation (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989).

### 3.2 **Relationship with colleagues**

When asked to assess their collegial relationships, 65 percent perceived them as positive, 17 percent as lukewarm and 18 percent as difficult to assess (refer to Appendix 6).

Salient reasons advanced for a positive relationship were as follows:

- I handle critical information about them (applied to those in the human resources departments);
- my own experience;
- my management style;
- an enabling policy;
- skills for the job;
- circumstantial reasons;
- demands by the new South Africa;
- they are confident in themselves; and
- team spirit.

Reasons forwarded for a lukewarm relationship were:

- they are not ready for affirmative action; and
- nepotism - they employ their relatives and club together to defend their ignorance.

Reasons given for a situation that is difficult to assess were:

- mixed relations; some are positive, others negative;  
and
- I am still new in this organisation.

It would seem that relations at collegial level range from neutral to positive, with the majority perceiving them positively, and without a single response on the totally negative side of the scale. Whether such positive relationships are circumstantial or genuine, they are indicative of a progressive management style which may lay a strong foundation for sustainable affirmative action and empowerment.

Relations with colleagues may provide horizontal power (Yukl, 1981) through access to information. For example, new recruits may be "shown the ropes," and for those employees already in a position, colleagues may provide information that may improve job performance. Adding to this, Kanter (1983) asserts that through informative forums at collegial levels informal participation in decision-making may be encouraged. Also, by socialising individuals and providing for their acceptance, such groups may provide opportunities to develop personal bases of power for each member.

### 3.3 Friends within managerial echelons

When asked about persons who respondents interact most frequently with at managerial levels, 56 percent reported that there was someone in their department, and 39 percentage stated that the person was not in the same department. For 5 percent of respondents the question was not applicable. In situations where the person was not in the same department, the friend was in the human resources department (18 percent), marketing and sales department (17 percent), production (10 percent) or finance (14 per cent).

For the majority of respondents (95 per cent) the gender of such a person is male and for a small percentage (5 percent), female. This person (friend) was in middle management for most respondents (60 percent), in senior management for some (24 percent), at the executive level for others (9 percent), and in lower managerial levels (7 percent) for the remainder. This person is black for many (51 percent), for a few, white (40 percent), and just for a handful, coloured (7 percent) or Indian (2 percent) (refer to Appendix 7)

The trend that is evolving here is that the managers of this sample seem to interact informally largely within their departments with black men who are at middle managerial levels. One possible reason for this is that the departments may be one of the places in which they feel relatively accepted. This is confirmed by their highly positive collegial relationships, and to some extent, their positive relations with their immediate superiors. This seems to be a good practice for the development of trust, a sense of belonging and to some extent, involvement in decision-making processes intra-departmentally. The approach may be problematic when it comes to access to information about other departments, knowledge of and access to important people, and one's visibility within the employing organisation, all of which are important in the development of one's bases of power.

Respondents may seek close contacts with other blacks for psychic support and to determine whether or not other blacks are experiencing the same range of situations. Adding to this, Dickens and Dickens (1982) assert that blacks still continue to seek out other blacks in interpersonal strategic planning due to trust, common experience, more honest feedback and the tendency to be more straight-forward with each other. Also, such preference may be traced to perceptions about relationships in the broader society. The perceptions are the result of the history of relations and complex processes of interaction and communication between particular groups. This fact has attracted the focus of social psychologists (Tajfel, 1981; Finchilescu, 1981; Foster, 1987). Also, since groups (black and white) at managerial levels are not isolated but exist in status hierarchies, along with varying degrees of legitimacy associated with such status arrangements, such behaviour may be a product of social positions and perceived legitimacy.

Implicit in this discussion is the fact that commerce and industry, at least at managerial levels, is still a man's world. Why social interactions are largely directed to males may be partly explained by the limited number of women in senior administrative roles. The question of why there is a lack of women in managerial positions does not fall under the mantle of this research.

### **3.4 Mentorship**

When asked if they ever had formal mentors when they were still novices in the industrial and commercial worlds, 66 percent responded positively and 34 percent negatively. For 47 percent of the respondents such mentors were white and for 18 percent black. The mentorship relationship was evaluated positively by 61 percent, while 3 percent did not know, and for 3 percent it was not meaningful (refer to Appendix 8).

The comments raised as regards the protégé/mentorship relationship are as follows:

I would have never managed without a mentor ... John (white male mentor) was very helpful and influential to my life. I really identified with him in terms of what and how to manage my work. He was articulate, smart, friendly, kind-hearted and clear about the expectations of a managerial role. He was truly accessible and a real role model to me.

The important role a mentor plays cannot be underestimated. This is supported by the following comments from the respondents:

Solly really made me never to feel the direct impact of discrimination. ... He was truly a buffer. He also compensated for my exclusion from organisational networks but I would have preferred a female mentor ... she would have understood better where I come from ... my historical and present frustrations. I felt my mentor was rather over-protective. ... In some situations I was unable to navigate independently.

On the whole mentorship relationships were evaluated positively, except for a few slightly negative comments relating to gender. Such negative comments may be a reflection of a basic discomfort of working with a mentor/protégé of the opposite gender (Ragins and Sundstrom 1989). Although from the cross-cultural and equality perspective mentoring should be determined by merit, the discomfort associated with gender power relations may be a reality in the South African patriarchal society and should be understood in its context.

When asked why they never had a mentor, some respondents advanced reasons as follows:

- racial discrimination;
- gender discrimination;
- absence of black/female role models;

- no mentorship programmes;
- poor commitment to affirmative action; and
- they (white management) assumed I did not need one.

#### 4. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

Once an individual enters the job market, the practices of the organisation begin to influence the chances for achieving positions of power. The first major transition concerns entry into the organisation, which involves

- (a) entry level, or rank;
- (b) departmental influence, in relation to other departments, and
- (c) positional power associated with the entry-level position.

Organisational factors may prevent the promotion to powerful positions of individuals from groups who form minorities within an organisation and may, in fact, track them into low-power career paths.

The presence of such factors may represent a nearly insurmountable barrier to individuals seeking high-power career paths in organisations. Regardless of the skills and abilities of such individuals, they may be restricted from advancement in an organisation if the institution has practices and procedures that overtly or covertly discriminate against them.

This section discusses organisational factors which impact on the individual's acquisition of power.

#### 4.1 **First job**

When asked about their first jobs in commerce and industry, 60 percent of the sample mentioned a non-managerial position and 30 percent a managerial one (refer to Appendix 9). Those appointed at managerial levels were largely in lower managerial ranks. This observation agrees with researchers on black advancement (Gathercole, 1981; Wella, 1983), who located African managers largely at lower managerial ranks in the early eighties.

Most respondents started in non-managerial jobs as clerks and blue-collar workers. Why such a high percentage started at such levels may best be explained by socio-political factors like poverty, relative deprivation and lack of access to education, health and housing. Whatever the reasons, rank is related to power (Halaby, 1977) and by definition is important to future advancement (Larwood and Gattiker, 1984).

#### 4.2 **Present job status**

All respondents occupy managerial jobs by designation. One percent of the total, however, do not want to be called managers since this designation is perceived as being for window-dressing purposes. The majority of respondents (59 percent) are at middle managerial levels, 19 percent at lower managerial levels, 17 percent at senior management level, 4 percent at executive levels and 1 percent at professional level (refer to Appendix 10). The fact that in the early eighties about 77 percent of African managers were in lower managerial ranks (Wella, 1983) and that the percentage at this level has subsequently dropped, may suggest that they have advanced to middle, senior, and top management as well as to executive levels.

If the assumption that respondents in this sample have been promoted to more senior positions is valid, it would be interesting to establish if such promotion enables them to feel empowered or not. If not, the temptation is

to view such promotion as more related to the fulfilment of affirmative action guidelines than to real accumulation of power.

The fact that all the respondents are in managerial positions has to be taken cautiously, given that it is possible to be in a high-ranking job (and also be in a powerful department) while having little positional power (like authority and accountability). In support of this assertion authors on black advancement (Wella, 1983; Sebesho, 1986; Ndlovu *et al.*, 1988; Nzimande, 1991) argue that in some instances whites within the department are transferred to other departments before the appointment or promotion of a black person to make sure that they are not supervised by blacks. This observation needs to be checked against other racial groups as well as broader societal demographics.

In addition, it could be argued that real advancement of blacks will take place when such individuals are in positions of power and control, and this can only happen through black empowerment. The feelings of black managers about promotion are revealed in the following comments:

We have nominally moved up, but operationally not much has changed ... we still do not have control over issues even at departmental level. ... We do not head departments, we do not have control over budgets, we are only in charge of blacks.

From the discussion it is evident that blacks still operate at the black-white interface and largely deal with other Africans - they seem to be "specialising" in African issues.

#### 4.3 **Department**

Closely related to the present job is the department in which blacks are located. Pertaining to the department that employs this sample, 60 percentage are in a human resources department mainly involved in appointments, training and development of industrial relations as well as administrative work. To a lesser extent there are respondents in marketing and sales (23 percent), production (9 percent), finance (4 percent) and

other areas (4 percent) (refer to Appendix 11).

The above scenario captures what has become the essence of affirmative action. It seems to be driven by the necessity to employ Africans in jobs that will bring about the most harmonious relationships between African labour and management on the one hand and companies with their customers on the other.

Authors writing about power agree that the power of the department is a function of its importance for the organisation as a whole (Mechanic, 1962; Perrow, 1970). Such authors further suggest that the most important contributions of a department involve control of resources critical for the organisation's survival or control over decision-making processes (Kanter, 1977a; Pfeffer, 1981). If we subscribe to this definition of power in relation to departments, then one is inclined to start questioning the amount of power the respondents' departments have if they deal predominantly with human resources. They remain largely peripheral to core functions such as finance, production, technical and engineering. Respondents still have limited accountability for budgeting and even fewer signing powers for expenditure. This supports Nzimande's (1991) assertion, and suggests that not much has changed in the quality of work life and power relations between races at the workplace.

When asked to compare departments in terms of influence within organisations, 35 percent of respondents perceived finance as being the most influential, 29 percent cited production, 25 percent marketing and sales, and only 9 percent advanced human resources departments and 2 percent public relations. This suggests that the respondents in this sample are largely located in departments they perceive to be least influential within their employing organisations. Their perceptions may be correct, but the reason may be the result of the educational qualifications they obtained rather than a deliberate attempt to undermine their role in the organisation.

#### 4.4 Visibility

When asked if they perceived themselves as visible or not, 90 percent answered positively and only 2 percent answered negatively. Another 8 percent did not know (refer to Appendix 12). Reasons cited for their perceived visibility were as follows:

- I am in a service department (58%) - human resources;
- I am black (16%);
- I am a woman (16%);
- I am a hard worker (2%);
- I interact informally with powerful individuals (2%); and
- I publicise myself through my successes (4%).

As is evident from the above, the most salient reasons advanced for visibility concern their location and physical characteristics. Likewise, their comments revolved around the same issue:

Being black in a white world (managerial echelons) is a rare phenomenon ... one's presence can never be mistaken for anything. It is like being white in the South African mines.

It is puzzling that little or no attention was given to involvements and success in organisational projects, participation in meaningful organisational committees and informal networks. It would be regrettable if blacks overlook forums as media through which they could make themselves more visible.

#### 4.5 Training

When asked if they felt adequately trained for their jobs, 82 percent reported themselves to be adequately trained, but 18 percent did not (refer to Appendix 13). Those who felt adequately trained, however, perceived training as a process and a relative concept. According to them, training is

an on-going process, given the challenges facing their jobs and departments. Even though most respondents felt adequately trained, at least in the quantitative sense, a sense of inadequacy as regards technical skills was communicated:

Although I am a university graduate and therefore have the necessary certificates, I feel I lack the technical skills for the job ... but the trainable base I do have. To address such inadequacies I collect as many certificates, degrees as well as diplomas as possible.

It will be recalled here that most companies, regardless of their philosophies, have established a norm that states that technical competence is more valued than managerial competence (Dickens and Dickens, 1982). As such, rewards seem to be given for results produced and not how well the people doing the job were organised, directed and developed.

Given the organisational importance of expert power (Spekman, 1979), the poor educational background of affirmative action groups and the fact that training and development can be a means of empowerment, employing organisations will have to train and develop human potential so that employees are enabled to face environmental challenges.

Respondents who felt inadequately trained cited technical knowledge, human relations and conceptual skills as areas in which they were inadequate, with the technical area rating the highest response. This is understandable given the fact that 90 percent of the sample graduated from universities and only 10 percent from technikons. Since training has become one of the most important avenues for upward mobility, their responses could be indicative of some preparedness for advancement on their part.

When asked how they thought they could acquire the skills they lack, most respondents cited formal off-the-job methods as a preferred option for skills acquisition. Their comments in this regard were as follows:

I will register with the University of South Africa for Management Business Administration. ...I will register with The Institute for Personnel Management for a diploma. ...I will register for certificated courses in finance and/or computers. This will enable me to have the necessary qualifications for promotion and better remuneration.

It would seem that the motive behind their studying is qualifications, advancement and better compensation. These findings support Herzberg's (1966) theory of motivation - that employees value such factors. The reason for salary being so valued may be explained by the characteristics of this sample in its context - South African blacks are the poorest and most powerless racial group in the country.

Why respondents seem to have a preference for formal off-the-job methods over informal on-the-job ones is not clear. It may be due to conditioning on the part of managers. Since most South African corporations rely a great deal on formal training (Hofmeyr, 1989), respondents may have learned to assign value to such methods. It is also true, however, that the work environment remains the major learning vehicle. One can learn from the boss, from colleagues and from subordinates. Such a network, if developed, may also be a support structure between employees and allow them to learn through on-the-job development.

As is well documented in the literature (Hofmeyr, 1989; Gandz, 1990; Human, 1991; Nzimande, 1991; Human, 1994) that development involves not only the ability and motivation of the individual, but also environmental or organisational expectations and opportunities. It is therefore through understanding the factors impacting on training and development that we can provide both individuals and the organisations in which they work with opportunities to overcome their shortcomings.

#### 4.6 **Job description**

When asked if they had a formal, written job description, 92 percent of the

sample answered positively and 8 percent negatively (refer to Appendix 14). Where a job description existed, it was mainly developed by the job incumbent and the superior. In some instances it was developed jointly by the predecessor, the job incumbent and the human resource department. It is clear that the job description is a joint effort; the job incumbent seems to be the central person in this regard although s/he works closely with an immediate superior. Such participation is indispensable if the employing organisations wish to empower their employees.

When asked to compare the formal job description with realistic job responsibilities, 75 percent viewed these as being congruent while 25 percent did not. Where there were differences, these were attributed to the challenging nature of the job, which was perceived as difficult to quantify. Such a positive response is understandable, given the incumbent's involvement in the development of the job descriptions.

#### 4.7 **Decision making**

When asked about their expectations regarding decision-making in relation to promotion, 54 percent indicated that they expected full decision-making powers on promotion. Fewer (43 percent) expected some decision-making powers and 3 percent of the sample did not know (refer to Appendix 15). From the following comments it can be deduced that there seems to be some frustration regarding this issue:

Decision-making: white managers decide, we only make suggestions or if we are called in at departmental levels, it is for window-dressing purposes as these are made, prior to the formal meeting, at the golf course which is predominantly attended by them.

Another respondent commented as follows:

Promotion goes with decision-making ... how can I be promoted and not be given decision-making powers that come with the position?

The reasons for full decision-making were as follows:

- for profitability and growth;
- in line with my responsibilities - I am in charge of blacks;
- it accounts for my responsibility and accountability;
- I am in no position of glory; and
- in line with my position - I am an executive.

The rationale behind the group that expected *some* decision-making powers was that:

No person ever has full decision-making powers. Even the company director decides with the management board ... each person is still accountable to someone.

Applying decision-making to the experiences of this sample, it would seem that they are minimally involved in organisational decision-making processes. Their involvement in such processes seems to be largely at the level of departmental meetings. Furthermore, they have a feeling that middle management (the positions they largely hold) is not given much leeway in terms of decision-making, which is left to senior management, including heads of department.

#### 4.8 **Advancement**

This section deals with perceptions regarding advancement of the respondents in relation to others (whites, white men, white women, black women and other black men [refer to Appendix 16]).

##### ◆ **Advancement in relation to white colleagues**

A higher percentage (57 percent) of the respondents perceived themselves as having moved more slowly than their white colleagues. There were, however, other groups who communicated different perceptions - 15 percent felt they had advanced faster than whites, 26 percent at the same rate, and 1 percent had difficulty assessing the

situation.

Reasons advanced for a slow pace included:

- I am in the wrong department with a low ceiling;
- racial discrimination and racial stereotypes;
- no conscious career plans;
- my white colleagues are largely technically trained, I am not;
- internal politics;
- companies are crazy about importing whites from abroad; and
- unequal opportunities, like job rotation for whites and not for blacks.

Their comments in this regard were as follows:

We are evaluated on peripheral issues which are not predictive of job performance, like who do you mix with/how well do you speak English?

Another respondent communicated the following:

It is not easy to advance as fast as you wish. ... There is some resistance from both white management (subtle) and the white working class (overt). ... What do you expect from a programme whose progress is neither monitored nor evaluated?

Reasons advanced for fast movement are as follows:

- adherence to the company's equal employment policies;
- timing - I joined the organisation at the right time/there are too many resignations up there;
- hard work;
- small company - small is beautiful; and
- language and culture problem - they speak Afrikaans and I am not fluent in Afrikaans.

The reason given for advancement at the same pace refers to company policies of equal employment opportunity.

The explanation for difficulty in assessing the situation revolved, in the main, around limited experience with the company on the part of the respondent, or too many resignations by colleagues and therefore problems in comparing self with new appointees.

◆ **Advancement in relation to white male colleagues**

(Male respondents only = 95 percent of the sample; refer to appendix 17 for gender distribution).

When asked about their advancement in relation to white male colleagues 54 percent reported a slower pace than that of their white counterpart, smaller percentages reported the same rate (24 percent), more quickly (11 percent), did not know (5 percent), and for 6 percent there was no movement.

The reasons advanced for this were the same as the previous ones. There was an element of generalisation and treatment of whites and white males as the same, as reflected in the same reasons and sentiments. One slightly different comment on reasons for a slow pace was as follows:

Affirmative action programmes are controlled by white males... they even control the corporate culture. For one to advance one has to conform to certain standards and values as decided upon by white males; how to dress, your mannerisms and body language as decided by them.... Obviously a person closer to them, their standards and values stands a better chance of being promoted.

At a theoretical level, there seems to be a clear "we" and "they" categorisation pertaining to black experience, with whites treated as a homogeneous group. Operationally, white men and women seem

to have different experiences, as will be evident in the paragraphs that follow.

◆ **Advancement in relation to white female colleagues**

(Male respondents only)

Forty percent viewed themselves as moving faster than white female colleagues, but smaller percentages as moving at the same rate (11 percent), more slowly (11 percent), difficult to assess (10 percent), not applicable (22 percent), and no movement (6 percent).

Reasons given for the relatively fast movement were gender discrimination as experienced by women, and the demands of the job (male clients and travelling long distances at night). Gender discrimination was also advanced for the perceived slow pace of blacks - they are preferred to their white female colleagues.

In some cases it was difficult to assess the situation, largely because white women managers had just been appointed and therefore had not advanced. Also, for some respondents there were no white female colleagues at managerial levels, and the question was therefore not applicable.

It is clear from the above discussion that white men, white women and black men seem to have different experiences, to some extent, in terms of advancement - white men move more quickly, followed by black men, and finally white women. These power inequalities may be complicated further by language differences, regional differences, ethnicity and a range of other factors which have been the basis for discrimination. Climbing up the corporate ladder, therefore, may not only be a matter of familiarity with corporate standards and values but may be governed by discriminatory practices which put men at an advantage over women, irrespective of race. Affirmative action policies and programmes should therefore address both race and gender, taking into account the compounding features mentioned above. International experience warns us that the separation of race and gender marginalises black women in favour of black men and white women. If these findings are taken in their context, the fact that men (of both races) advance

faster than women may suggest that jobs are structured largely by white males to suit their convenience (like travelling long distances, and even at night). If this assumption is true, it is therefore accidental that black males benefit.

◆ **Advancement in relation to black female managers**

For 79 percent of the respondents the question did not apply as they do not have black female colleagues at managerial levels. For 8 percent it was difficult to assess, 3 percent had advanced faster than their black female counterparts, 1 percent at the same speed, 2 percent more slowly and 5 percent had experienced no movement.

Why so many companies still do not have women managers was explained by gender discriminatory factors and stereotypes such as:

- women do not have managerial skills;
- this is a man's world - women are not even accepted in the corporate clubs;
- corporate politics;
- males set standards for evaluation; and
- black males have outgrown the stigma attached to blackness, black women have not.

What is of greatest interest here is that women at work are evaluated by male colleagues, and presumably more "objectively" than if assessed by women themselves.

Affirmative action seems to be full of contradictions. For instance, although most companies which employ this sample have paternity/maternity leave at policy level, and have formal affirmative action policies, 80 percent of them do not have women at managerial levels.

Discriminatory practices appear to be common at managerial levels, but they are subtle. Examples of such practices, as advanced by the respondents, are sexism, exclusive male corporate clubs, sexual harassment, and an invisible ceiling. The situation as presented here, therefore, necessitates affirmative action programmes which

are conceived as part of a wider programme of employment equity which seeks to remove, barrier by barrier, discrimination and disadvantage and which aims to create a workplace which is affirmative of the diverse nature of society (Ramudzuli and Menne, (1994). Furthermore, the situation demands close monitoring and evaluation by top management for a sustainable process of affirmative action.

◆ **Advancement in relation to black male colleagues**

When assessing their situation in relation to black male colleagues, 44 percent of the sample perceived themselves to have moved at the same pace because, as they put it, "we are all blacks subjected to similar conditions." A smaller percentage (36 percent) seem to be moving faster, a few saw their advancement as slower (4 percent), some did not know (7 percent). In some cases the question was not applicable (4 percent), and for some there was no movement (6 percent).

While it cannot be denied that blacks as a group are subjected to similar experiences, the interpretation of such experiences is unique to each individual. Equally important are situations that make it possible for some blacks to transcend environmental constraints like prejudice and discrimination.

Those who have succeeded advanced the following reasons:

- location - I am employed by a big company with a high employee turnover;
- timing - being in the right place at the right time;
- I have more experience and qualifications;
- I am assertive;
- I believe in the informal networks;
- I have relevant training; and
- I am involved in important decision-making committees of the corporation.

Although there were some questions designed to tap the experiences of female respondents in relation to advancement, since they comprise only 5 percent of the sample, it is difficult to draw conclusions from their answers. However, this does not invalidate their comments, which are as follows:

I cannot advance because I am appointed to positions without authority and responsibility that go with them ... I feel frustrated and job dissatisfied as I am not enabled to develop my potential. ... It is a fact that such frustration and dissatisfaction can filter through to my female colleagues and subordinates - they may start developing an attitude towards advancement processes pertaining to women.

Another respondent communicated the following:

The male-dominated networks disqualify me from many informal situations where much of the political game-playing takes place. This, I suspect, marginalises my support base and denies me access to information which my male colleagues use to their benefit. ... I am telling you, we as women are in a no-win situation - if you assert yourself, you behave like a man; If you work quietly, you are no good as you are submissive. How then can one best behave?

The unstated rule indicates that men select and advance women who conform totally to traditional male patterns, yet remember their place.

Another respondent made the following comments:

How do I advance when I have such limited access to training opportunities? Even the training programmes are not controlled by women. Men, because of their positions within the employing organisations (employers and unions), determine priorities for, and the future of, the training.

Training programmes themselves are usually run by men. ...The content of the training programme is often not relevant to women and sensitive to gender issues. I believe if they [employing organisations] are serious about women's advancement, they should employ more than one woman at a time to a managerial position and train those women for the jobs they are appointed to. ... The situation out there is very intimidating to women ... it is really women-unfriendly.

It is clear from the above that structural constraints to both appointments and advancement seem to be a reality in affirmative action settings and therefore need to be addressed. For affirmative action to be sustainable, perceptions about it have to change. It will have to be perceived as a means of empowering blacks to develop their skills and their ability to successfully fill higher positions and to take control of resources (Human, 1991). Practically, affirmative action should be a means of ensuring that blacks are empowered to successfully control and manage resources, and that they are subsequently given the responsibility of control and management of those resources.

#### 4.9 Corporate clubs

When asked if there were any corporate clubs in their organisations, 78 percent responded positively and 22 percent negatively (refer to Appendix 18). Where corporate clubs existed, the number ranged between two and six, covering fishing, golfing, soccer, card games, squash and darts. Although 49 percent of this group were members, it was evident from their comments that they were not regulars in such corporate clubs.

I do not have time, I belong to a number of professional organisations... I am not interested in these types. ... I am still new on the job and busy familiarising myself with the job expectations ... I am studying part-time. ... I have lots of community involvement ... Clubs still have a tinge of discrimination.

Reasons advanced for non-membership included:

- meetings are held during awkward times (evenings);
- meetings are held in awkward venues away from where blacks stay; and
- blacks are not yet genuinely accepted in such clubs.

We should not under-estimate the important role that is played by the corporate clubs. This is one avenue through which the "intermarriage" between job incumbents and the organisations may take place. They assimilate the values, norms and other information that is otherwise a normal part of their white peers job system. Also, important decisions are made in corporate clubs.

Respondents who belong to corporate clubs, play a relatively passive role. This may be explained by their mistaken understanding of the purpose of the clubs created for entertainment and relaxation. The corporate clubs appear to be exclusive and operate in a strange and unfamiliar setting - a setting that is even further formalised by the language used. Respondents have to communicate in English or Afrikaans, and participation is therefore perceived to be restricted and formal.

#### 4.10 **Projects**

When asked if they ever became involved in any company projects which were initiated by themselves, 62 percent responded positively and 38 percent negatively (refer to Appendix 19). The types of projects included community development, research and (most popularly) training and development. The preferred choice of the respondents seems to be more situational, in view of the fact that they are predominantly in the human resource department and largely involved in training and development and therefore conducting needs assessments for such training.

Managers who had not yet been involved in any corporate projects, cited the following reasons:

- projects are the responsibility of senior management;

- I am still new in the company;
- there is a department directly responsible for that;
- it is difficult to be creative when one holds a meaningless job;
- I am still fighting for my recognition on-the-job;
- work overload; and
- time constraints - I am studying privately.

From these comments it seems that there are certain departments and/or positions that are responsible for company projects. If one is not in such departments or position, one may nevertheless be given leeway as regards the initiation of projects.

#### 4.11 Important factors for appointment

When provided with six important factors for appointment, and asked to rank each one of them, 97 percent of the sample rated *merit* first, followed by *being black* (62 percent), being a *black man* (47 percent) and lastly being a *man* (43 percent). As would be expected, two factors - being a *black woman* and being a *woman* (two factors, 95 percent each) - were not applicable since the respondents are men (refer to Appendix 20).

From these responses one may deduce that the companies employing this sample largely rely on merit for selection. Some political factors (race and gender), however, seem still to be made use of. If this is so it is unfortunate, as such factors do not predict job performance and are discriminatory. The possibility of being appointed for political reasons (rather than being the best applicant for the job) may unfortunately be translated into "I wonder if I am as prepared for my job as my white peers."

This perception may be compounded if the applicant graduated from a historically black university. Even though this does not make the black person less qualified than the white counterpart, prejudicial perceptions about the quality of education at black universities can cause further doubts.

#### 4.12 Factors that influence promotion

When asked to identify the most significant factors for promotion, in order of importance, *individual factors* (like job skills and experience) were rated the highest (56 percent), *organisational factors* (culture, attitudes, job openings and the department) were rated second (50 percent), and *political factors* (like skin colour and gender) were rated least important (22 percent). (refer to Appendix 21).

The rating given to *individual factors* is unexpected, but highly commendable to the employing organisations. It is indicative of the possibility that the corporate world uses, to a large extent, job-related criteria for promotion. If this is true it suggests that promotion is largely under the control of individuals themselves. It also explains why respondents to this study seem to value individual training through private study, a point that was revealed by the findings. One may deduce that they study to prepare themselves for promotion.

It also has to be noted that the score for *organisational factors* is not low. These factors are not so much under the control of the respondents. If

they are important for promotion, respondents would be expected to experience an approach-avoidance conflict when they try to reconcile two more or less equally important factors, or are faced with one beyond their control. They may find themselves, for instance, collecting as many certificates as possible on one hand, while on the other having frustrated expectations as organisational factors act as obstacles. The responses suggest that affirmative action should be perceived as a means of challenging current human resource strategies and of creating an environment in which employees can develop and be promoted on merit, irrespective of race and gender; an environment with diverse cultures to which each employee should adapt.

#### 4.13 **Job success factors**

When the respondents were given ten factors to assess in terms of their importance for job success a high percentage rated *experience* positively (90 percent), followed by *effort* (89 percent), *educational qualification* (84 percent), *skin colour* (79 percent), *ideology* (74 percent), *connections* (62 percent), and *other factors* (ethnicity, 60 percent). What was evident in the ranking was that these factors were all rated as very important rather than important. On the negative side of the scale were *heritage* (50 percent), "*tricks*" (60 percent) and *luck* (64 percent) - factors which were perceived to be unimportant (refer to Appendix 22).

The first three factors on the positive side of the scale are individual ones and are largely under the control of each respondent. Skin colour and ideology are political and discriminatory, and therefore do not reflect fair employment practices. It is noted with regret that such factors are still perceived as determinants for people's success at work. It suggests the need for more rigorous consultations between management and employees about affirmative action as well as the training and development of managers on equality issues.

For the managers in this sample it would seem that *connections* are an important factor for job success. The motive behind such importance may be reinforced by the amount of power held by the person one is connected to. Through such connections one may have access to information, opportunities and resources, and may improve one's power base.

#### 4.14 **Perceptions about self in relation to institutional power**

When given ten impressions about themselves in relation to their employing organisations, and asked if they agreed with such impressions, the respondents agreed with all these in the following manner: (refer to Appendix 23)

- awareness of who important people are (98%);
- right to make suggestions (96%);
- right to consultations (88%);
- a meaningful departmental position for the respondent (86%);
- access to important people (84%)
- the right to co-decision (81%);
- the right to make decisions (80%);
- an influential and powerful department (78%);
- control over valued resources (74%); and
- ability to change one's life (68%).

From the above responses it may be deduced that most respondents are involved in some form of participation at their workplace. Since participation is the principal manifestation of power (Poole, 1978), those who participate are expected to feel relatively empowered and those who do not to feel relatively powerless. At the level of making suggestions (influence decisions, but not responsible for them) it seems that a high percentage is involved, but as we move to the level where respondents jointly control and authorise the process of decision-making within the employing organisation, the percentage of respondents who are involved seems to drop gradually. It will be interesting to establish which groups feel more central in the decision-making process - an issue which will be addressed in the next chapter.

#### 4.15 **Feelings about participation and control over issues**

When presented with different faces that reflected different feelings and asked to choose one that best depicted the feelings of most people like themselves about their organisations, 65 percent responded positively, 12 percent negatively and 23 percent were neutral to the statement (refer to Appendix 24).

The response to this question suggests some improvement in the perception of black managers regarding their quality of life when compared to those expressed in the early eighties (refer Wella 1983). Factors

contributing to this suggest another important area for further research.

**To conclude:** The aim of this chapter has been to describe the characteristics of the sample. The following are its salient characteristics: The sample comprises *100 men and women* who are mostly *men* (95 percent) in *early adulthood* (70 percent) and mostly *university graduates* (79 percent). They are largely located in the *human resource departments* (personnel and head office) at *middle managerial* level. Most of them seem to *have a positive work relationship with both their colleagues and superiors*.

Regarding important factors for promotion, *individual* factors (job skills and experience) are *perceived as more important* than organisational ones (job openings, corporate culture) and political factors (race and gender). The same factors are important for job success. Advancement seems to follow a certain pattern - *white men are perceived to move the fastest followed by black men, then white women and lastly black women*.

Decision-making for this group of managers seems to operate at *two levels*:

- at the level where the respondents influence decisions but are not central to the process;
- at the level where they are central to the process and play a decisive role in it.

The majority of this sample fall within the first category.

Overall, their perceptions are positive about their roles within the employing organisations in relation to empowerment.

Although there was not much mention of societal factors in this chapter, the premise for the discussion is that *societal, organisational, interpersonal* and *individual* factors are interdependent. For this reason factors related to power at one level may affect others. For instance, the societal tracking of some advantaged groups (like whites and men, in terms of access and control of important resources) into high power occupations and specialties may increase their likelihood of entering employing organisations in powerful positions and departments. Powerful positions may in turn grant such groups greater access to powerful networks and mentors. These interpersonal relationships may augment their organisational, interpersonal and individual resources of power. Gaining power and critical interpersonal relationships may in turn increase their career aspirations, sense of security, visibility and power-related skills.

The next section analyses this data statistically.

## CHAPTER 5


### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The main objectives of the statistical analysis were as follows:

- ◇ to obtain the measure of association between each of the given variables;
- ◇ to reduce the number of variables into small hypothetical clusters for subsequent analyses;
- ◇ to make estimates of the values of the dependent variables from the values of the independent variables, to discern the quantitative relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables, and
- ◇ to test hypotheses.

To achieve this goal the following statistical procedures were undertaken:

- 
- ◇ correlation analysis;
  - ◇ factor analysis; and
  - ◇ regression analysis.

The results of the analyses demonstrate a number of modest but highly significant relationships. It is, however, also a fact that some variables are not statistically significant. For this reason the scenario that emerges from the results is as follows:

- (a) confirmation of the hypotheses, or
- (b) rejection of the hypotheses. The findings have, however, to be interpreted against the following background:
  - ◇ The sample for this study consists of black managers, most of whom (59 percent) are employed in human resources departments personnel and head office). Within this department the employment process is still largely under the control of their white colleagues (Nzimande, 1991; Human, 1994; IDASA, 1995).
  - ◇ This research discovered that these black managers largely occupy lower managerial strata than their white colleagues (who are in this sense their immediate superiors).
  - ◇ Black advancement/ affirmative action programmes are controlled by white managers, with power inequalities, therefore they are structured along racial lines.
  - ◇ empowerment is largely a political process involving black managers (who are "being empowered") and white managers (who play a crucial role in the empowering process).

Given the relatively high quality methodology adopted, the results of this research are reliable, but limited in terms of application to some situations.

A discussion of the results of each statistical procedure follows.

## 2 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Since data obtained from the univariate analysis (frequency distributions - refer to Chapter 5) were descriptive of the sample, it was necessary to establish the degree of relationship between variables - the information which was going to be useful in subsequent analyses (The significant levels of such relationship is discussed at the regression analysis stage). Each variable was therefore correlated with another using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, given the fact that the questionnaire data was already in a rank form. Since there were a number of variables (total=168) the result was multiple correlations. These correlations provided information about independent variables which were potentially helpful in predicting dependent variables in the subsequent analyses. Tables 1, 2 and 3 reflect correlation matrices for dependent as well as independent variables (those that are more relevant in hypotheses testing). Only half of the correlation matrices are given since the rest is a mirror image of others. All numbers have been taken to two decimal places.

**Table 1**

**Correlation Matrix**  
**(independent variables)**

Var	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1,00								
2	-,16	1,00							
3	,23	-,46	1,00						
4	-,05	,34	-,35	1,00					
5	-,23	,32	-,23	-,11	1,00				
6	,15	-,16	,03	,09	-,06	1,00			
7	-,10	,18	-,20	,07	,24	,26	1,00		
8	-,10	-,27	,32	,39	,20	,21	,26	1,00	
9	,02	-,02	,01	-,17	,10	,18	,10	,05	1,00

where:

variable 1 = age

variable 2 = job status

variable 3 = salary

variable 4 = education

variable 5 = collegial relationship

variable 6 = relations with superior

variable 7 = feelings about participation and control

variable 8 = membership of corporate clubs

variable 9 = total work experience

**Table 2**  
**Correlation matrix (important factors for job success)**

Var	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1,00									
2	,27	1,00								
3	,06	,31	1,00							
4	-,25	-,24	,04	1,00						
5	-,13	-,11	-,11	,44	1,00					
6	,11	,06	,04	,28	,33	1,00				
7	,12	,00	,13	,46	,38	,63	1,00			
8	-,13	-,01	-,09	,32	,14	,13	,29	1,00		
9	-,13	,00	-,01	-,03	,02	,05	,08	,28	1,00	
10	,01	,22	,10	,32	-,05	-,01	-,04	,14	,28	1,00

where:

variable 1 = effort

variable 2 = educational qualifications

variable 3 = work experience

variable 4 = connections

variable 5 = heritage

variable 6 = luck

variable 7 = tricks (doing things in different ways)

variable 8 = race

variable 9 = ideology

variable 10= ethnicity

**Table 3**  
**Correlation matrix**

(impression about self in relation to employing organisations)

Var	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1,00									
2	,24	1,00								
3	,17	,31	1,00							
4	,12	,12	,14	1,00						
5	,05	,32	,12	,15	1,00					
6	,05	,26	,25	,47	,28	1,00				
7	,34	,25	,14	,10	,20	,27	1,00			
8	,28	,27	,21	,27	,11	,27	,43	1,00		
9	,36	,32	,21	,12	,25	,23	,41	,43	1,00	
10	,31	,34	,30	,30	,21	,32	,28	,32	,18	1,00

where:

variable 1 = control over valued resources

variable 2 = access to important people

variable 3 = influence and power of the department

variable 4 = meaningful position

variable 5 = awareness about important people

variable 6 = right to consultation

variable 7 = right to co-decision

variable 8 = right to make decisions

variable 9 = right to make suggestions

variable 10= ability to change things that affect one's life

Data from Table 1 was retained as it is, while that from Tables 2 and 3 were each subjected to an oblique rotation of factor analysis. The following section therefore discusses factor analysis.

### 3 FACTOR ANALYSIS

The main objective for the use of factor analysis was to represent a set of variables in terms of a smaller number of hypothetical ones in order to explore the underlying dimensions of the data.

The advantages of factor analysis are that all variables with a high correlation load heavily on a factor. It can therefore be assumed that variables which present the convergence of thinking on a specific issue will load highly on one factor, thus indicating the pattern of thinking on given issues (Zulu, 1994). It also organises data in a meaningful and logical way and is a convenient step to further treatment of data.

As a technique, factor analysis has its limitations: non-related variables may load heavily under one factor. Also, it works best with large samples (100 or more).

The researcher and a senior academic studied the questionnaire items with the aim of selecting questions that were directly related to hypothesis testing. These were important job success factors (10 variables) and impressions about self in relation to employing organisations (10 variables). Each set of variables was then subjected to an oblique rotation of factor analysis and three factors emerged. The Kaiser's criterion was used to determine the number of factors extracted with eigenvalues greater than one, with caution taken regarding the requirements for this approach with specific use of SPSS sub-commands.

Table 4 and 5 reflect the factor pattern of the solution for important job success factors.

**Table 4**

**Important factors for job success**

**Oblique Rotated factor Matrix**

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
<b>1 effort</b>	<b>,06</b>	<b>,46</b>	<b>-,50</b>
<b>2 qualifications</b>	<b>,23</b>	<b>,75</b>	<b>-,07</b>
<b>3 experience</b>	<b>,09</b>	<b>,68</b>	<b>-,08</b>
<b>4 connections</b>	<b>,77</b>	<b>-,14</b>	<b>-,00</b>
<b>5 heritage</b>	<b>,69</b>	<b>-,17</b>	<b>,09</b>
<b>6 luck</b>	<b>,68</b>	<b>,32</b>	<b>-,11</b>
<b>7 tricks</b>	<b>,78</b>	<b>,36</b>	<b>-,16</b>
<b>8 race</b>	<b>,55</b>	<b>,08</b>	<b>,34</b>
<b>9 ideology</b>	<b>,00</b>	<b>,28</b>	<b>,73</b>
<b>10 other (ethnicity)</b>	<b>,16</b>	<b>,34</b>	<b>,64</b>

**Table 5**

**Factor Variance for important factors for job success**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage variance</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>56%</b>

**Table 5** shows that factors 1, 2 and 3 account for 56 percent of the variability, factor 1 scoring the highest followed by 2 and lastly factor 3. The order of importance of the factors indicates that a major portion of the explained variance in perceptions about important factors for job success in affirmative action environments is due to factor 1.

It is necessary to provide an interpretation of these factors. In what follows, only loadings (based on the factor structure solution) which are greater than an absolute value of 0,30 will be listed. Loadings of an absolute value of 0,40 or greater will be used to identify the factors (Child,,1970; Anastasi, 1976; Castle, 1979; Hamburg, 1983; Cates, 1985; Mulder, 1987). Those that have a correlation of less than 0,30 will not be considered since they account for less than 9 percent of the variance and so are unimportant.

Table 6 shows factor 1

<b>Table 6</b>	
<b>Factor 1 : Organisational climate factors</b>	
<b><u>Variable name</u></b>	<b><u>Factor loadings</u></b>
<b>4 connections</b>	<b>,77</b>
<b>5 heritage</b>	<b>,69</b>
<b>6 luck</b>	<b>,68</b>
<b>7 tricks</b>	<b>,78</b>
<b>8 race</b>	<b>,55</b>

All the variables loading on this factor load positively.

The highest loadings are on variables 4, 5, 6, and 7. These are unearned as well as unstable variables which are external to the job. The variables reflect perceived attitudes, values and behaviours of employing organisations. All the variables loading in this factor are designed to include some employees and exclude others, and thus reflect perceived unfair organisational practices. The factor thus measures the extent to which unfair organisational climate factors are important for job success. The person who scores high on this factor is likely to have strong feelings about organisational climate factors. The findings raise some questions about affirmative action environments and concerns about the sustainability of programmes if such variables are still perceived to contribute to job success. Furthermore, the findings suggest the necessity for close monitoring and evaluation of such programmes.

Factor 2 is discussed in Table 7.

**Table 7**

**Factor 2 : Individual factors**

<b><u>Variable name</u></b>	<b><u>Factor loadings</u></b>
<b>1 effort</b>	<b>,46</b>
<b>2 qualifications</b>	<b>,75</b>
<b>3 experience</b>	<b>,68</b>
<b>4 luck</b>	<b>,32</b>
<b>5 tricks</b>	<b>,36</b>

The factor is largely based on variables 2 and 3 - job specifications. These earned factors concern the extent to which individual's expertise is important for job success. The high loadings on these together with those on variable 1, seem to measure a person's ability; hence the name will be "individual factors." The person who scores high on this factor is likely to have strong feelings about earned factors in relation to job success.

Factor 3 follows in Table 8

**Table 8**

**Factor 3 : Political factors**

<b><u>Variable name</u></b>	<b><u>Factor loadings</u></b>
<b>1 effort</b>	<b>-,50</b>
<b>8 race</b>	<b>,34</b>
<b>9 ideology</b>	<b>,73</b>
<b>10 ethnicity</b>	<b>,64</b>

This factor is bipolar with more positive than negative loadings. The factor is to a large extent based on ideology and ethnicity. Looking at these variables (as they have the highest loadings and are likely to give the factor its flavour), it seems that the factor reflects political elements which, in this context, may influence job success. The description of the factor is thus measuring "political factors." The person who scores high on this factor is expected to have strong feelings about political factors in relation to job success. S/he is expected to feel that affirmative action is disempowering. Effort seems to be negatively related to the political factors, which is understandable given the fact that a person who scores high on effort is expected to score low on political factors.

The following section is devoted to the second set of variables - impressions about self in relation to employing organisations. Table 9 shows the factor pattern of the solution for self in relation to the employing organisations.

**Table 9**

**Oblique Rotated Factor Matrix**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>
<b>1 resource control</b>	<b>,56</b>	<b>-,43</b>	<b>-,28</b>	<b>-,30</b>
<b>2 access to information</b>	<b>,59</b>	<b>-,00</b>	<b>,39</b>	<b>-,30</b>
<b>3 influential department</b>	<b>,49</b>	<b>,02</b>	<b>-,13</b>	<b>-,58</b>
<b>4 responsible position</b>	<b>,51</b>	<b>,55</b>	<b>-,43</b>	<b>,19</b>
<b>5 awareness</b>	<b>,40</b>	<b>,32</b>	<b>,68</b>	<b>-,07</b>
<b>6 consultation</b>	<b>,61</b>	<b>,57</b>	<b>,02</b>	<b>,19</b>
<b>7 co-decision</b>	<b>,64</b>	<b>-,31</b>	<b>,10</b>	<b>,34</b>
<b>8 decision</b>	<b>,66</b>	<b>-,25</b>	<b>-,18</b>	<b>,41</b>
<b>9 suggestion</b>	<b>,62</b>	<b>-,37</b>	<b>,26</b>	<b>,21</b>
<b>10 able to change things</b>	<b>,65</b>	<b>,10</b>	<b>-,28</b>	<b>,26</b>

Table 10 reflects the percentage of variance explained by each factor.

<b>Table 10</b>	
<b><u>Factor Variance</u></b>	
<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage Variance</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67%</b>

From Table 10 it may be noted that factors 1, 2, 3 and 4 account for 67 percent variability, factor 1 scoring the highest and other three factors having a fairly even spread. The order of importance of the factors indicates that a major portion of the explained variance in attitudes about one's position in relation to the employing organisation is explained by factor 1.

It is necessary to provide an interpretation of these factors.

Table 11 therefore reflects the variable loadings on factor 1.

**Table 11**

**Factor 1 : Decisive role**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>
<b>1 control over valued resources</b>	<b>0,56</b>
<b>2 access to important people</b>	<b>0,59</b>
<b>3 Influence of the department</b>	<b>0,49</b>
<b>4 responsible position</b>	<b>0,52</b>
<b>5 awareness of who important people are</b>	<b>0,40</b>
<b>6 right to consultation</b>	<b>0,61</b>
<b>7 right to co-decision</b>	<b>0,64</b>
<b>8 right to make decisions</b>	<b>0,66</b>
<b>9 right to make suggestions</b>	<b>0,61</b>
<b>10 ability to change things at work</b>	<b>0,65</b>

Factor 1 loads fairly evenly, with all the variables loading positively. It is clear that the variables are, to a large extent, based on the last five variables (6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, because they have the highest loadings), which concern the perceived involvement in decisions about issues at work; The factor thus measures the extent to which managers of this sample play a decisive role in such issues at work, hence its name will be "decisive role." The high loadings are not difficult to interpret given the fact that most of the respondents (59 percent) are in human resource departments. In that department they are responsible only for issues concerning black employees, they are relatively decisive within this limited role. It would also be useful to investigate the extent to which they play a decisive role in broad organisational issues.

A person who scores high on this factor is likely to feel that s/he is central to the process of decision-making, and feel that affirmative action programmes are indeed empowering.

Table 12 shows factor 2

<b>Table 12</b>		
<b>Factor 2 : Influential role</b>		
<b>Variable Name</b>		<b>Factor Loadings</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>control over valued resources</b>	<b>-0,43</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>responsible position</b>	<b>0,55</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>awareness</b>	<b>0,32</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>right to consultation</b>	<b>0,57</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>right to suggestion</b>	<b>-0,31</b>

This factor is bipolar with more positive than negative loadings. Variable 6 has the highest loading followed by variable 4. These two variables can thus be taken as giving the factor its flavour. Taking this into account, the factor measures the extent to which the respondents influence decisions even though they are not central to the process of decision-making; in other words, it measures the extent to which the respondents co-operate in this process. The factor will therefore be named "influential role in decision-making." Respondents who score high on this factor are expected to have strong positive feelings about their positions within the employing organisations.

**Factor 3** is reflected in Table 13.

**Table 13**

**Factor 3 : Awareness**

<b>Variable Name</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
<b>2 access to important people</b>	<b>0,39</b>
<b>4 responsible position</b>	<b>- 0,43</b>
<b>5 awareness</b>	<b>0,68</b>

This factor is bipolar with more positive than negative loadings. The factor is to a large extent based on awareness and concerns the individual's perceptions of the situation (cognition). It measures the extent to which respondents have knowledge about important people within their organisations. Taking into account the highest significant loadings, the factor measures awareness in relation to one's position; hence its name will be "awareness."

The positive relationship between variable access to important people and awareness is clear. It suggests that a person who scores high on variable 2 does the same on variable 5. The inverse relationship between these variables and variable 4 is unexpected but not difficult to interpret. It means that the managers who score high on access to important people and awareness, score low on responsible positions and do not feel they are in responsible and accountable positions.

**Table 14** shows factor 4.



**Table 15**

**Factor Correlation**

Factors for job success				Self and employing organisations			
Factors	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
1	1,00	-,01	,03	-,22	-,24	-,02	-,00
2	-,01	1,00	-,04	,15	-,06	-,16	,04
3	,03	-,04	1,00	,13	-,39	,11	-,17

Self and employing organisations				
Factors	1	2	3	4
1	1,00	,04	,08	,04
2	,04	1,00	,04	,03
3	,08	,04	1,00	,00
4	,04	,03	,00	1,00

It is worth noting the following relationships:

- ◇ a low inverse relationship between decisive role and negative organisational factors;
- ◇ a low inverse correlation between influential role and political factors; and
- ◇ a low inverse relationship between influential role and unfair organisational climate factors.

The correlations, although modest, suggest that:

- (1) Individuals who play a decisive role within the organisation seem to have negative perceptions about the organisational climate factors and their contribution to one's success. This suggests that centrality to decision-making brings one closer to frustration.
- (2) Individuals who play influential roles within their organisations seem to have negative perceptions about the organisational climate and political factors.

It appears that the climate factors are negatively related to both the decisive and influential roles of managers.

Pursuant to these results is the possibility that it is individuals who play a decisive and/or influential role who come face to face with the ambiguities and contradictions associated with affirmative action, hence their negative perceptions. The findings therefore suggest the importance of acknowledging the crucial role that is played by organisational climate factors in enabling or disabling black managers in the process of empowerment. These findings imply a need to look at the contribution of organisation climate and political factors to job success.

The next section discusses regression analysis.

#### **4 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

Once the set of variables had been reduced by means of factor analysis the question of the relationship between these sets was considered. Prior knowledge from factor analysis and correlation analysis led to the selection of independent variables which were potentially useful in predicting the values of the dependent variables (grouped into factors). It was therefore important to assess each subject's standing on the dependent variables, taking into account all relevant questionnaire items. Multiple regression was chosen as the most widely used method for multiple comparisons by social scientists (Bryman and Cramer, 1990)

The following tables demonstrate the relationship between dependent variables (largely factors) and independent variables (job rank, salary, age, education, collegial relationship, relations with superiors, feelings about control over issues and membership in corporate clubs). Although the accuracy with which each set of independent variables explains a dependent variable is poor ( $R-SQ = < .50$ ), and the effect each independent variable has on the dependent one is small (coefficient), the relationships are statistically significant. Since this research was conducted in the field (rather than under the controlled conditions of an experimental laboratory), it could have been affected by some confounding variables.

Given the purpose of this research - to investigate the attitudes of managers by covering a reasonably sufficient number of individuals from different working environments - both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions were equally important. Consequently, the researcher was quite rigorous in the analysis. The results, although reliable, have to be seen against this background.

#### 4.1 Criterion correlation for decisive role as a dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
relations with superior	-0,13	0,10	-1,24	0,22
collegial relationship	-0,10	0,13	-0,80	0,43
job rank	-0,25	0,14	-1,77	0,08
education	-0,02	0,10	-0,23	0,82
age	-0,02	0,01	-1,81	0,07
participation & control	-0,28	0,11	-2,53	0,01
Constant	2,75	0,85	3,23	0,00

The criterion correlation as shown above indicates that decisive role is indeed related to feelings about participation and control over issues at work. Since "participation and control over issues is reverse scored, this relationship is positive. This means that managers who play a decisive role within their organisations have positive perceptions (or are happy) about their participation and control over issues. The findings agree with those of other researchers in the field of empowerment (Gaventa, 1980; Elden, 1986; Kieffer, 1984; Wilson and Ramphela, 1989; Gandz, 1990; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

The analysis of variance for the full regression follows in Table 16.

<b>Table 16</b>					
<b><u>Analysis of Variance</u></b>					
<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	17,79	6	2,96	3,39	0,00
Error	81,21	93	0,87		
Total (corr)	99,00	99			
R-squared = 0,18					
N = 100					

The correlation between decisive role and feelings about participation and control, although small, is statistically significant in the 99 percent range ( $P < 0,01$ ). Participation and control is therefore a highly reliable predictor of centrality in decision-making processes.

The following section isolates education and job rank as independent variables and demonstrates its relationship to decisive role.

#### 4.2 Criterion correlation for decisive role as a dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
education	-0,05	0,10	-0,44	0,66
job rank	-0,30	0,14	-2,13	0,04
Constant	1,02	0,61	1,69	0,10

The criterion correlation indicates that job status is negatively related to decisive role. This means that it is actually the relatively junior managers that play a central role in the decision making processes within the employing organisations.

The analysis of variance for the full regression follows in Table 17.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	4,50	2	2,25	3,31	0,10
Error	94,50	97	0,97		
Total (corr)	99,00	99			
R-squared = 0,05					
N = 100					

The correlations between job rank and decisive role are not statistically significant, indicating that job rank is not a reliable predictor of centrality in the decision-making processes.

A discussion of influential role as a dependent variable follows.

## 4.3

**Criterion correlation for influential role as a dependent variable**

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
relations with superior	0,38	0,01	3,68	0,00
collegial relationship	0,13	0,13	1,04	0,30
job rank	-0,03	0,04	-0,22	0,83
education	-0,15	0,10	-1,45	0,15
age	0,01	0,01	-0,48	0,63
particip. & control	-0,19	0,11	-1,65	0,10
Constant	-0,01	0,86	-0,02	0,99

The criterion correlation indicates a positive relationship between superior-subordinate relationship and influential role, holding the other variables constant. In this sample, an improvement in the superior-subordinate relationship will produce a increase in influential role given that collegial relations, job rank, education, age, participation and control are held constant. This means that a more positive working relationship between the subordinate and superior will result in a corresponding positive perception about an influential role in decision-making.

An analysis of variance for the full regression follows in **Table 18**.

**TABLE 18**  
**Analysis of variance**

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	15,95	6	2,66	2,98	0,01
Error	83,05	93	0,89		
Total (corr)	99,00	99			
R-squared = 0,16					
N = 100					

The correlation, although not impressive, is statistically highly significant ( $P < 0,01$ ). This means that the superior-subordinate relationship is a highly reliable predictor of positive perceptions about one's influential role within departments. This is a challenge for affirmative action environments. The findings suggest a potential positive contribution resulting from a healthy relation between subordinate and superior. In this sense, then, employing organisations could rely more on immediate superiors as formal mentors and coaches.

#### 4.4 Criterion correlation for departmental influence as a dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
relations with superior	0,07	0,01	0,65	0,52
collegial relationship	-0,06	0,13	-0,41	0,68
job rank	-0,20	0,15	-1,31	0,19
education	0,15	0,11	1,43	0,16
age	-0,02	0,01	-1,51	0,13
participation and control	-0,09	0,12	-0,78	0,44
Constant	1,10	0,89	1,23	0,22

The analysis of variance follows in Table 19.

<u>Table 19</u>					
<u>Analysis of variance</u>					
<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	9,60	6	1,60	1,67	not significant
Error	89,40	93	0,96		
Total(corr)	99,00	99			
R-squared = 0,10					
N = 100					

It is clear from Table 19 that the influence of the department is not statistically related to the above independent variables. These variables are therefore not predictive of the influence of the department in which one is located.

#### 4.5 Criterion correlation for organisational climate factor as a dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
education	0,27	0,10	2,60	0,01
job rank	0,10	0,15	0,70	0,49
decisive role	-0,18	0,10	-1,79	0,07
collegial relationship	0,22	0,13	1,75	0,08
relations with superior	-0,00	0,10	0,01	0,99
Constant	-0,44	0,64	-2,26	0,03

The criterion correlation demonstrates a positive relationship between organisational climate factors and education. This suggests that perceptions about the organisational climate are influenced positively by one's level of education. The relationship expressed in the data is relative and indicates that at very high levels of education there is a slight propensity for individuals to be guided by their own discretion on political issues rather than being affected by the process of groupthink.

One other issue which needs to be considered here is the fact that all respondents are members of the Black Management Forum (BMF). Such membership might reinforce positive perceptions about negative organisation climate as a strategy to gain acceptance from such environments. It is possible that if the same instrument was administered to non-members it would result in the emergence of a different picture.

Table 20 reflects the analysis of variance for the full regression.

**Table 20**

**Analysis of variance**

<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	13,58	5	2,72	2,99	0,01
Error	85,41	94	0,91		
Total (corr)	98,99	99			

R-squared = 0,14  
N = 100

The table demonstrates a high statistically significant relationship between education and organisational climate ( $P < 0,01$ ). This means that education is a highly reliable predictor of organisational climate factors.

**4.6 Criterion correlation for collegial relationship as a dependent variable.**

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
education	-0,01	0,08	-0,19	0,85
job rank	0,34	0,11	3,10	0,00
Constant	0,57	0,47	1,22	0,22

Job rank does account for the type of collegial relationship that will prevail. The criterion correlation demonstrates a significant positive relationship between these variables, indicating that the higher one is within the managerial hierarchy, the more positive collegial relations become. One explanation for this observation may be the subject's position power, possible visibility and proven record of success which together may help demystify the racial and gender stereotypes in the workplace. Alternatively, as the black manager moves up the status ladder s/he starts to be more accepting to the colleagues, and interacts more with them, even informally. It is then that s/he is also accepted as s/he is by colleagues (Wella, 1983).

The analysis of variance for the full regression appears in Table 21.

<b>Table 21</b>					
<b><u>Analysis of variance</u></b>					
<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	6,54	2	3,27	5,62	0,00
Error	56,42	97	0,58		
Total (corr)	62,96	99			
R-squared = 0,10					
N = 100					

Table 21 shows a high statistically significant relationship between collegial relationship and job rank ( $P < 0,01$ ). It therefore indicates that job rank is a highly reliable predictor of collegial relationship.

4.7 Criterion correlation for feelings of participation and control over issues at work as dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
education	0,13	0,10	1,39	0,17
job rank	0,27	0,13	2,12	0,03
Constant	1,27	0,55	2,28	0,02

The strength of the relationship between job rank and feelings about participation and control over issues is expected. It suggests that the more senior one is within the managerial echelons the more positive one feels about participation and control over issues. Education seems not to be significantly related to feelings about participation and control.

Analysis of variance and full regression follows in Table 22.

<u>Table 22</u>					
<u>Analysis of variance</u>					
<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	4,09	2	2,04	2,51	0,09
Error	78,82	97	0,81		
Total (corr)	82,91	99			
R-squared = 0,05					
N = 100					

The relationship between job rank and participation and control is not statistically significant. This means that job rank is not a reliable predictor of feelings about participation and control over issues.

4.8 Criterion correlation for feelings about participation and control over issues at work as dependent variable

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>Standard Error</u>	<u>T Value</u>	<u>Significant Level</u>
collegial relationship	0,25	0,11	2,18	0,03
relations with superior	0,24	0,09	2,57	0,01
individual factors	0,03	0,09	0,36	0,72
education	1,13	0,09	1,37	0,17
salary	-0,18	0,10	-1,82	0,07
corporate club membership	0,23	0,09	2,56	0,01
Constant	1,78	0,41	4,37	0,00

The criterion correlations demonstrate that positive collegial relationships, relations with the immediate superior and corporate club membership are related to feelings about participation and control over issues at work. The correlations suggest that with club membership, positive relations with both the immediate superior and colleagues at work there is a corresponding positive feeling about participation and control over issues. Why the individual factors (earned factors for job success) are not related to feelings of control is puzzling. If variables like educational qualifications, work experience and effort do not influence feelings of empowerment, the experience in such situations could have potential for frustration. The results are, however, consistent with those of 6.4.8.

The analysis of variance follows in Table 23.

<u>Table 23</u>					
<u>Analysis of variance</u>					
<u>Source</u>	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F Ratio</u>	<u>P Value</u>
Model	12,82	5	2,56	3,44	0,01
Error	70,09	94	0,75		
Total (corr)	82,91	99			
R-squared = 0,15					
N = 100					

The relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion is statically significant ( $P < 0,01$ ). This means that relations with superiors, relations with colleagues and as corporate club membership are indeed highly reliable predictors of feelings of participation and control over issues at work.

In conclusion, since the ultimate aim of the statistical analysis was hypotheses testing, there was a need to move beyond correlation analysis (bivariate analysis), given the possibility that bivariate relationships could be spurious. Regression analysis was chosen as an exploratory way and a means to guard against this, providing control variables and thus statistics that would help "eliminate" spurious relationships to some extent.

As stated earlier, although some findings do not confirm the hypotheses, those that do demonstrate a high level of statistical significance. More importantly, all the findings uncover knowledge that truly reflects the social world (black managerial experience in affirmative action situations in relation to the empowerment process).

The next section is devoted to a discussion of the results in relation to the hypotheses.

## **5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS IN RELATION TO THE HYPOTHESES**

This research was guided by the hypotheses that where blacks in managerial positions do not perceive themselves as being central to decision-making processes within the employing organisations, are in less influential departments, occupy less influential positions and do not know the important people, they will feel that they are not participating and in control over issues at work.

The degree of relative powerlessness (lack of, or poor participation and control) will vary with the type of relationship the black manager has with colleagues and the immediate superior, membership to (or lack of it) to corporate clubs and the level of education. The less educated, those with strained relations with colleagues and those who do not belong, will feel more disempowered than their counterparts within affirmative action settings.

The above findings from correlation analysis through factor analysis to regression analysis indicate the following:

- **HYPOTHESIS 1: CONFIRMED**
- **CENTRALITY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF FEELINGS OF EMPOWERMENT**

Centrality in the decision-making process does influence feelings of control over issues at work (empowerment). The relationship, although modest, supports the hypothesis and findings of other researchers on empowerment (Poole, 1978; Ng, 1980; Rappaport, 1981; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988; Gandz, 1990; Orford, 1992). More importantly, the findings demonstrate that involvement in decision-making for this sample influences feelings of empowerment.

These findings reflect positively on the notion of participation and control within the white-controlled employing organisations. Of particular concern, however, is the quality of such decision-making, given the fact that most black managers (60 percent) are in human resources departments supervising only blacks (Wella, 1983; Human, 1992; Nzimande, 1991) and making decisions about issues that affect black clients or employees.

However, given the predictive value of decision-making for feelings of control over issues, the findings suggest that to empower this sample of managers, employing organisations should expand issues handled in decision-making (from those largely covering black ones) also to cover broad organisational ones. Furthermore, given the historical legacy of apartheid in this country, it remains a fact that decision-making in white-controlled organisations involve unequal power relations. Additionally, there is white resistance to affirmative action programmes which, at these levels takes subtle forms and may easily be mistaken for acceptance (Nzimande, 1991; Walkins and Mauer, 1994; IDASA, 1995). For this reason top management may need not only to involve black managers in decision-making, but also to closely monitor the actual content of the relationships in such a process as defined by participants. The focus thus needs to be more process-oriented, encouraging mechanisms for change. This is in line with the finding that mere decision-making do not automatically enable relatively powerless groups to be integrated with the powerful ones; inequalities will always prevail until power relations change (Davis, 1951; Giddens, 1968; Gaventa, 1980). These scholars would question the sustainability of perceptions of empowerment if power relations of the participants remain unequal. The findings therefore suggest awareness on the part of management about such issues as well as how the relatively powerless exercise control even when resources are limited.

- HYPOTHESIS 2 : CAN NOT BE CONFIRMED
- THE INFLUENCE OF DEPARTMENT IS NOT A RELIABLE PREDICTOR OF EMPOWERMENT

The finding that the power of the department does not influence feelings of control over issues at work (empowerment) does not support the hypothesis. It therefore disagrees with the findings of other researchers in this regard (Kahn and Boulding, 1964; Gross, 1968; Goldstein, 1974; Pfeffer, 1981; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). Why feelings of empowerment should be unrelated to departmental influence is puzzling, but not impossible to explain.

Firstly, it could be that (as indicated earlier) this sample of managers is located largely in the human resources departments - the department they themselves do not perceive as playing an influential role in relation to other departments in commerce and industry. They may therefore be too "distanced" from powerful departments to fully experience power.

Secondly, since attitudes are very complex and do not always explain behaviour, the unexpected finding may not be so surprising. However, given the rigorous analysis of this data (univariate, bivariate and multivariate) the results are reliable.

- HYPOTHESIS 3 : CAN NOT BE CONFIRMED
- THERE IS NO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB RANK AND EMPOWERMENT

The lack of a relationship between job rank and feelings of control over issues at work does not support the hypothesis. The accuracy with which job rank predicts empowerment is also poor ( $R=.05$ ). The results, however, do agree with those of Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), who argue that although job rank is a determinant of empowerment, position power is still influenced by the power of the department. This suggests that in situations where the employing department is not perceived to be influential (in terms of control over resources critical for organisational survival) it is unlikely that job rank, irrespective of the level, will be perceived to empower.

Whereas in the 1950s the highest rank for blacks in industry was the *induna*, Nzimande (1991), this study found that the highest position held by the sample was *executive management* (only 2 percent of this sample was found at executive level; the majority was still largely at middle managerial level). The scenario that is unfolding here is that although there is higher demand for more educational qualifications, resulting in an improvement in job rank, it would seem that the quality of work life for this sample has not improved substantially - a situation which illustrates status incongruity. To ensure that job rank starts influencing feelings of empowerment, there needs to be a shift in occupation (intra-organisationally, demographics have to change in production and finance departments) as well as the types of degrees obtained (more economics and science degrees). This should be so, given the fact that the choice of qualification has a major influence on the area of employment (Bramwell, 1972; Jones, 1973/86).

- HYPOTHESIS 4 : CAN NOT BE CONFIRMED
- AWARENESS IS NOT THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF FEELINGS OF EMPOWERMENT

The finding that awareness of who important people are does not influence feelings of control over issues, does not support the hypothesis. This disagrees with other authors on empowerment (Rappaport, 1981; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988). This could be due to the following:

Firstly, given their location (largely in the human resources departments) the "knowledge" these managers are referring to is largely the knowledge of the particulars of all the employees of the employing organisation - the knowledge *indunas* kept in their heads (Nzimande, 1991).

Secondly, due to the same physical location this sample of managers is visited and consulted by all employees and potential employees regarding employment issues (that is, by the "important" as well as the "not so important" people). In this sense they "know" these people, but this is part of their job description. This happens at a formal level - in the employment office; in this sense the experience may not be a satisfying one to them. The perceptions might improve if the process of interaction could be broadened to include important decision-making committees and informal networks.

Thirdly, black managers still, to a fairly large degree, occupy lower status positions in relation to their white counterparts. Although they are central in terms of keeping records about employee particulars, the white managers still control a large area of the employment process as a whole, with variations, of course (Nzimande, 1991). In this sense, then, they are psychologically distanced from acknowledging the benefits of the process of awareness in terms of feeling empowered by and through it, hence the absence of a relationship between the two variables.

Adding to this, Godsell (Natal Witness April 13 p.9, 1995) captures the scenario very well when he argues that in the information age what is important is not what one knows but how well one assesses and uses that knowledge. It is unlikely, then, that the type of knowledge black managers have may help empower them. Elden (1986) argues that if the information people have does not help them develop locally grounded theories (process) about their own experiences and they are not authorised to do so, then such knowledge does not empower. If the position of the two authors is true, then the absence of a relationship between awareness and empowerment is understandable.

- HYPOTHESES 5 & 6 : CONFIRMED
- COLLEGIAL AND SUPERIOR RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

Collegial and superior relationships are important predictors for empowerment. The results support those of other authors on empowerment (Kanter, 1977; Yukl, 1981; Collins, 1983; Kram, 1985; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989; Nel, 1990; Wiggill, 1991). They suggest that improved relationships with colleagues and superiors result in positive feelings about control over issues at work. The findings are encouraging, since normally much development of employees takes place at departmental level - on-the-job (Hofmeyr, 1989; Human, 1991). They also suggest some potential for departments to empower blacks in affirmative action environments. Furthermore, they point to conditions under which affirmative action can be effective. More importantly, they potentially support the creation of an enabling environment with a supportive collegial culture for perceptions about affirmative action in relation to empowerment to be positive. I would argue that caution is needed to ensure that such relations at work do not become paternalistic but truly empower blacks to act as independent managers.

The discussion of hypotheses 3, 5 and 6, interpreted within the South African context with its problems and challenges (emigration of white professionals, skilled person-power shortages especially at managerial levels, status imbalances according to race at such levels, and change in black psychology with greater levels of self-confidence) further suggest black management development as a key strategic objective (Human, 1992). Furthermore, the findings suggest the need for serious evaluation of management behaviour with regard to management development.

- HYPOTHESIS 7 : CONFIRMED
- MEMBERSHIP IN CORPORATE CLUBS DOES INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

Like other interpersonal relationships membership in corporate clubs is a reliable predictor of empowerment. This finding confirms those of other authors (Kanter, 1977a; Pfeffer, 1981; Mintzberg, 1983). Three general types of information may be exchanged in such situations : that about job openings, information needed to perform job function, and the politics of the organisation.

This may result in visibility, better performance appraisals and higher probability of promotion. In short, club membership may provide information that may increase the individual's expert power, and by promoting mobility may indirectly increase their position power as well (French and Raven, 1959). The usefulness of the "old boy network" or "old school tie" still exists.

These findings are a challenge to both black and white managers to take another look at the corporate culture and how enabling or disabling it is to all its members. Furthermore, blacks will need to change their mind sets from those of "outsiders" to "insiders." Nothing succeeds like self-confidence and a will to succeed (Ramphela, 1992).

- HYPOTHESIS 8 : CAN NOT BE CONFIRMED
- EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS DO NOT PREDICT PERCEPTIONS OF EMPOWERMENT

There is no relationship between educational qualifications and feelings of participation and control over issues. Why these variables are unrelated is a puzzle, given the value attached to university degrees in this country. Top bureaucrats, corporate managers, and executives are drawn from graduates (Nzimande, 1991), and the fact is that 70 percent of this sample are university graduates. It would seem that high educational qualifications do enable members of the sample to obtain a managerial job; thereafter other factors (like the ones already discussed) start becoming more important determinants of the quality of the employees life.

Some social, psychological and sociological factors may account for these findings.

Firstly, given the fact that most of this sample (70 percent) belong to the early adulthood stage of development (21-39 years) it is likely that, if educated in South Africa, they were affected by the well-documented effects of Bantu Education. Needless to say, this could have been compounded by the 1976 (and post 1976) persistent crises in education. The problem with this generation is the stigma attached to the certificates obtained during this period. For instance, it may be found that at the workplace some unfounded correlations are drawn between performance and the "quality of the certificate", even in situations where there is potential for the employee's development. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy this may lead to under-

performance.

In addition, the majority of the sample feel they are constrained by a lack of technical skills, since they are university trained. Indeed, this may also be self-fulfilling and has the potential to lead to poor motivation and performance.

Having a university degree, then, may not predict feelings of empowerment, especially if the degree was obtained from a black university (Bramwell, 1984). (refer also to Appendix 25.)

Since this research also found that educational qualifications do not account for the black manager's advancement (job status), centrality in decision-making, or influence in decisions, the absence of a relationship is therefore understandable.

Chapter 6 focuses on a general summary of the results, the limitations of this research and conclusions. It also evolves research insights and implications for management.

## CHAPTER 6

### GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH INSIGHTS

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the main findings, draws some conclusions and finally puts forward some key insights that evolve from the findings.

The general aims of this research were:

- To explore the nature of the organisational climate factors that are associated with the phenomenon of empowerment.
- To explore organisational practices that are related to affirmative action.
- To describe empirically the experiences of African managers in affirmative action settings.
- To establish the African manager's perceptions of the location of organisational power and influence.
- To establish the African managers' perception of their own power and influence within organisations.

The questions guiding this research were as follows:

- ◇ Where are Africans located within the managerial echelons?
- ◇ What are the conditions under which affirmative action programmes empower/ disempower African managers?
- ◇ What factors account for the objectively slow pace of affirmative action programmes?

To obtain this information a structured interview schedule with both open-ended and closed-ended questions, and interviews were used. As regards the interview schedule, questions tapped the perceptions of black managers regarding their empowerment in employing organisations. Face-to-face interviews with 100 black managers employed in white-controlled organisations in the private sector were conducted by the author.

## **2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RESULTS**

### **2.1 Interview Results**

Descriptive statistics revealed the following important information:

The majority of managers in this sample (70 percent) belong to the early adulthood age range (21-39 years), are university trained (79 percent) and have worked for a minimum of 13 years in the private sector (54 percent) but less than three years within the current organisation (54 percent). In terms of gender, 5 percent is female and 95 percent male. The sample is predominantly located in human resources departments (59 percent) at middle managerial levels (59 percent). Most of them seem to have positive relations with their superiors (72 percent) and colleagues (64 percent). While their white male colleagues advance more quickly to higher managerial echelons, their white female counterparts advance more slowly, and black female colleagues the slowest.

They perceive employing organisations to be progressive in terms of having affirmative action policies in place, although the pace at which they are moving in appointing, advancing and empowering this group is perceived as slow. For instance, whereas most of their employing organisations are progressive in terms of conditions of service (paternity/maternity leave benefits), only 5 percent of this sample of managers is women.

Experience, effort, educational qualification, skin colour and connections seem to be perceived as important determinants of job success.

Participation in decision-making seems to operate at two levels:

- ◇ at the level where black managers influence decisions but are not central to the process;
- ◇ at the level where they perceive themselves to be central, and jointly controlling the process with white management, thus playing a decisive.

Most managers in this sample seem to fall within the first category.

Finally, as regards empowerment, the majority is happy about the process as it is practised within their organisations.

## 2.2 Statistical Analysis

Although the correlations were weak, the following findings emerged:

- Playing a central role in decision-making is the main predictor of feelings of empowerment in affirmative action settings.
- Job status positively influences collegial as well as superior relationships. Such interpersonal relationships are further related to positive feelings about empowerment.
- Membership of corporate clubs positively influences empowerment.
- Relationship with superiors positively contributes to an influential role in decision-making.
- With further education managers develop a positive perception of organisation climate factors - a finding which suggests that at high levels of education there is a propensity for individuals to be guided by their own discretion.
- There is no significant relationship between empowerment of the individual and the power of the department.
- Awareness has no significant relationship with empowerment.
- There is no significant relationship between job status and empowerment.

In general, this sample of managers has a positive perception toward decision-making and are happy about their participation and control over issues at work. It would seem that factors that contribute to perceptions of empowerment include centrality in decision-making, positive collegial and superior relationships as well as membership of corporate clubs. The major factor that contributes to feelings of empowerment is centrality in decision-making processes.

## 2.3 Problems Encountered

### 2.3.1 Methodological problems

These are outlined in detail in Chapter 4. To summarise, the problems were:

- The under-representation of biographical sub-samples which made it difficult to compare the respondents' perceptions of power across gender and occupational lines. Respondents available at the time were mostly men in human resource departments. However, since the sample was randomly selected and relatively large (N=100), generalisations made are justifiable.
- Because this sample comprises only members of the Black Management Forum, the Black Accountants in Southern Africa and the Institute For Personnel Management, these results cannot be readily extrapolated to non-members. In a sense, the sample is not truly representative of the wider South African population of managers outside such organisations. However, since they are all managers by definition and were randomly selected from an alphabetically organised BMF, ABASA and IPM listing, generalisations about findings are further justified. It may be argued that the choice of the sample was necessitated by the purpose of the study - control of the variable power. In this regard it was envisaged that there could be a possibility that the perceptions of members of these groups regarding empowerment would differ from those of non-members. However, by definition all respondents are managers occupying different ranks within the managerial echelons.

- There was 38 percent non-participation, an observation which could make it difficult for the researcher to gauge the representativeness of those who participated in relation to the targeted population. However, 25 percent of this total reflects the same individuals who appeared more than once on the lists, an observation that drops the non-participation rate to 13 percent. Even if the number remained at 38 percent, actual comparison between these groups would have been conducted on fairly superficial characteristics (like: educational level, age and gender). Deeper attitudinal ones could not be readily tested. Also, most respondents could not be contacted (had moved permanently to other countries). Finally, the study was not intended to give a representative picture of black management responses to empowerment, but rather draw out a broad range of possible facts that are related to empowerment/ disempowerment in affirmative action settings as perceived by black managers. Results are therefore justifiable.
- The high percentage of non-response could have interfered adversely with the sample size and subsequently the intended analysis to be undertaken. However, the researcher tried to prevent this bias - hence the original 160 subjects. It, however, remains a fact that a sample of 100 subjects is small for the multiple comparisons undertaken.
- The choice of method used was expensive. It involved telephoning for interviews, travelling, and attending seminars and workshops. Postal interviews would have been cheaper. However, given the advantages of the personal interview over postal interviews, the choice of the first method is justifiable.
- There was high reliance on a structured questionnaire for data collection. The structuring of the responses could have biased the results. However, given the fact that the researcher extensively made use of the comments of the respondents, results are therefore justifiable.

### 2.3.2 Problems of analysis

- Although there were significant relationships between variables, the magnitude of such correlations was small. The following limitations inherent in the study could be attributed to this observation:
- reliance on content analysis of the managers' verbal responses which produced ratings for each variable;
- the use of a questionnaire which could have spuriously increased the number of significant relationships;
- the structure of work attitudes covered by this questionnaire could have been quite complex. This may have been exacerbated by the fact that attitudes in general do not always predict behaviour.

However, because of the rigorous nature of the data analysis (qualitative as well as quantitative), and the fact that conclusions are based only on findings which were confirmed by the statistics, the results are considered valid and reliable;

- the use of correlational forms of analysis limited the explanation of black management experience in terms of cause and effect. For this reason, the researcher further made use of the "exploratory" multiple regression analysis to help in making decisions about the analyses.
- the use of multiple regression increased the likelihood of a Type 1 error associated with multiple comparisons. However, the researcher reduced the probability of this error by lowering the significance level from 0,05 to 0,01. There is therefore a very small probability that the researcher decided incorrectly about the relationship (Heiman, 1996). Results are therefore justifiable, and
- in some instances the hypothesis was rejected, like departmental influence and empowerment.

The absence of a hypothesised relationship could be due to the possibility that the hypothesised independent variable is but one of the many possible predictors of the criterion variable. It could also be due to inadequate conceptualisation of the terms used for research. In the case of empowerment, the key variable for this research, the concept still remains a buzzword for which there is no agreed definition. A definition is still evolving (Nel, 1990; Foxman and Polsky, 1991; Vanderslice, 1994). However, most authors on power/ empowerment (Poole, 1978; Elden, 1986; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989) agree that participation and control are important elements of power.

The following section discusses conclusions. These are, however, not mutually exclusive - they are interdependent.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

- \* **The main predictor of feelings of empowerment/ disempowerment is centrality in decision-making processes.**

This research uncovered that centrality in decision-making influences feelings of empowerment. These findings agree with those of numerous research studies and theories on empowerment (Poole, 1978; Elden, 1986; Erwee, 1988; Gaventa, 1980; Gandz, 1990).

Given the reliable predictive value for empowerment of centrality in decision-making, the findings need to be taken seriously. For this variable to continue to empower, top management may have to expand the issues of decision-making also to cover broad organisational ones. Also, the actual contents of the relationships in the decision-making process as defined by the participants may have to be closely monitored.

- \* **A positive relationship with one's superior is a reliable predictor of feelings of empowerment.**

The managers of this sample seem to have a positive relationship with their superiors, which in turn positively influences their perceptions about empowerment. The perceived friendly attitude of the superiors is a positive sign and an improvement on the negative attitudes reported in the '80s (Hofmeyr, 1981; Wella, 1983; Sadie, 1985; Human, 1986; Charoux, 1987; Human, 1989; Hofmeyr, 1989). What is good about this "change of heart" is its coincidence with the positive perceptions of the more educated group of black managers in this sample. Black managers displayed positive perceptions about the "political" organisational climate factors. The positive attitude on both sides could be indicative of some readiness among both groups to work together for common goals. Such an interdependent relationship is also conducive to increased social interaction at work, which is in turn associated with increased job satisfaction (Robbins, 1991). The findings are in support of the recommendations by Negota (1987) and Human (1991) who argue for employee development, and management development in particular, to be line driven in affirmative action environments.

The fact that such positive relations are not defined in terms of honesty and acceptance, is a point for concern and management has to work on its improvement. Trust is a very important factor in human relations. One way to achieve this goal is by encouraging regular informal departmental networks where all members meet even with their families so that they start interacting at a personal level, develop trust for, and fully accept one another.

\* **A positive collegial relationship does influence feelings of empowerment.**

Managers in this sample seem to have positive collegial relationships. Good relationships with peers and superiors have been found to facilitate organisational socialisation, to help job incumbents in coping with job stress and work demands, and to aid in personal and professional development (Feld and Brett, 1983; Lewin *et al.*, 1983; Kram and Isabella, 1985). Adding to this, Yukl (1981) argues that such a relationship has potential for horizontal power through access to information by way of alliances. Given the politics that prevail at the workplace, horizontal power for these black managers may still depend on who their colleagues are and how much power they have. A positive collegial relationship can also provide managers with social support, which may in turn reinforce their sense of belonging to the employing organisation (Wella, 1983). This may provide an enabling environment that could allow a willing manager to develop (Moerdyk and Coldwell, 1990; Human, 1991). However, this research also uncovered that such a positive collegial relationship is highly influenced by job rank. The finding thus suggests that in order to sustain the black manager's positive perceptions about collegial relationships in relation to empowerment, management has to consider the issue of advancing black managers with potential to more senior positions.

\* **Membership of corporate clubs does influence feelings of empowerment.**

Since this variable is such a reliable predictor of empowerment, the corporate world may have to strengthen its support and commitment to it by removing barriers to the realisation of the goal of empowerment. Examples of barriers reported during the interviews are language, venue and times for such club gatherings. English, being the commonly used language, was perceived to be constraining to those who use

it as a second language. Venues were often felt to be inaccessible, given the fact that clubs often meet at night in town, and many black managers still stay in African townships. Such constraints may have to be addressed if club membership is to continue to empower managers.

\* **Job rank is positively related to superior as well as collegial relationships.**

This finding suggests that as one advances up the status ladder, there is a corresponding acceptance by colleagues and superiors. It could be that as black managers move up they are involved in responsibilities that make them more visible. This is another challenging area for affirmative action environments. It suggests that for managers to be accepted at work, they need to be advanced to more senior managerial echelons. The assumption is, however, that such job incumbents are enabled (through training, development and support) prior to advancement.

\* **Departmental influence is not significantly related to feelings of empowerment.**

This finding is understandable given the fact that most managers of this sample also perceive their department of employment as being relatively powerless. It will be recalled here that the majority of the sample is located in the human resources department (60 percent). Authors writing on power agree that the power of the department is a function of its importance for the organisation as a whole (Mechanic, 1962; Perrow, 1970). The managers of this sample mostly belong to the department where they deal predominantly with human resources and remain largely peripheral to core functions such as production, technical, finance and engineering. The challenge for management is to expand the issues that are handled by blacks in their departments of employment. Also, management should involve them in decision-making committees and encourage their membership and participation in the informal organisational networks. Additionally, more blacks with potential should be employed in the fields of engineering, production, technical and finance. However, there needs to be some support mechanisms to enable the job incumbents to cope with the "new challenges" of the new settings.

\* **Position power is not related to feelings of empowerment.**

The fact that in white-controlled organisations the structural as well as political factors determine access to decision-making and control of resources in favour of whites (Zulu, 1991; Human, 1994) makes this finding understandable. Till to-day, the situation has not changed much. Although most managers of this sample occupy middle managerial positions (59 percent), they perceive these as "specialist" positions where they largely deal with black issues. Furthermore, they are more influential than decisive in departmental and organisational issues.

Most authors on power agree that the power of the department augments position power (Kanter, 1977a; Pfeffer, 1981). If this is true, the fact that this sample of managers also perceive themselves as belonging to a relatively powerless department could make the situation worse for them. The challenge for white management is a shift in occupational demographics and more representation of blacks with potential in all managerial echelons. The challenge for black management is a shift in the type of degrees they register for (more economics and science degrees). Such a shift, however, may only help correct the situation if the reason for this perception is their educational qualifications rather than a deliberate attempt to undermine their role in the organisation.

\* **Awareness does not influence feelings of empowerment.**

Due to the physical location and the job ranks of most of the managers of this sample, the type of information they have access to seems not to have an empowering effect on them. Although they are central in terms of keeping employee records, white management still largely control the employment process. Access to information that is perceived not to be empowering combined with their location, and non-participation in informal networks should make the situation worse for them.

It would, therefore seem that the key areas for management to address is the department of location. If there are fundamental changes in demographics, skills and power; perceptions about job rank and awareness may also change. Although the three findings that were not confirmed by the hypotheses took an unexpected direction to the hypothesised one and, like others, are based on perceptions rather than reality, they are important issues for management to address. This may be so in view of the fact that individuals act on interpretations of reality rather than reality itself.

- \* **Affirmative action environments for this group seem to have contradictions and inconsistencies.**

This research confirmed that affirmative action has contradictions and inconsistencies (also refer Bramwell, 1972; Wella, 1983; Nzimande, 1991), some of which are as follows:

- Even though this sample of managers is highly qualified (at least in the quantitative sense), they are largely located in human resources departments, occupy mostly middle and junior ranks of management, and advance more slowly than their white male colleagues.
- They are all designated as managers but supervise largely, or only, blacks in "specialist" positions, and have no budgetary control.
- Most of them have worked for more than thirteen years in the private sector, but have three years or less experience intra-organisationally.
- The last contradiction relates to organisational climate and is discussed in the next section.

- \* **Organisational climate factors (negative attitudes and unfair promotional practices) are still perceived to be in place.**

This perception persists despite the positive working relationship between managers and their superiors and colleagues. Such organisational climate factors impact negatively on both the influential role and centrality in decision-making. In this sense it would seem that the frustrating area for managers is not in the departments of location, but in the organisation itself. The results suggest that immediate superiors and colleagues are not associated with the broad organisational culture, an observation which further confirms the contradictions as outlined above. No matter what the rationale is behind this perception, organisational climate still remains unfair to the majority of managers. Taking into account the self-fulfilling prophecy and its influence on behaviour, such organisational climate factors have potential to influence under-performance on the part of managers. They therefore need to be addressed.

In contrast, more educationally qualified managers from this sample perceive such

organisational climate factors positively.

Such contradictions and inconsistencies have the potential to contribute to frustration and under-performance (Wella, 1983; Human, 1991; Nzimande, 1991).

\* **Educational qualifications do not predict empowerment.**

The findings indicate that educational qualifications do not seem to help black managers in a number of important areas of operation. For instance, they do not predict advancement or centrality, play an influential role in decision-making, nor are they determinants for feelings of empowerment. What they seem to predict is a high salary. If the employing organisations are serious about developing top bureaucrats, corporate managers and executives from the pool of graduates, they may have to develop mechanisms to retain those graduate managers. Without such mechanisms, black managers may continue to move from one company to another in search of "greener pastures." On the other hand, black managers will have to acknowledge that such vacillation may disturb the process of their empowerment.

The following section discusses the research insights uncovered by this research and the implications for management.

#### **4 RESEARCH INSIGHTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**

It may be necessary to point out several important insights that evolved because of this research, and by way of speculation, on their basis to suggest some possible implications for management for a sustainable affirmative action programme.

##### **4.1 Decision-making is the main determinant of feelings of empowerment.**

Most members of this sample are peripheral to the process of decision-making, usually making suggestions to senior (predominantly white) managers. This research revealed that the role of influence in decision-making has no relationship to empowerment. What was also revealed by this research is that where managers play a decisive role in the decision-making processes, they feel empowered. The research therefore argues for a shift in focus - from that of influential role to a central

one. Given the predictive value of centrality to decision-making, the research insight suggests the broadening of issues that are addressed in such processes. However, such an exercise may necessitate a fundamental transformation of power relations so that decision-makers operate from more or less the same level of power. Ramphela (1992) argues that affirmative action within the South African context should go beyond mere white male affirmation of others; it has to strike at the very roots of the social structure which has spawned privileges for some and deprivation for others.

The research insight thus suggests action to change structures which support and encourage unequal race relations in favour of equity. The underlying rationale for such a transformative approach is that the subordinate position of blacks to whites within institutions has to be addressed for institutions to be effective and efficient. Such a transformative approach will necessarily need tools to address the possible conflict arising from change.

It may be only then that centrality in decision-making continue empowering minority groups (minority in terms of numbers within management echelons) in affirmative action environments.

#### 4.2 **Black managers are not homogeneous.**

This research uncovered that black managers *are* heterogeneous.

- \* They have different training backgrounds. Although their academic degrees vary, they are mostly trained in the humanities and social sciences.
- \* They occupy different status positions within the employing organisations, ranging from lower through to executive management positions - with the majority located at middle management levels.
- \* They are in different departments (human resources, marketing, production, finance), the majority being found in human resources departments.
- \* They differ in terms of gender (men and women).

This research insight suggests that starting from entry level, black managers join employing organisations with different competencies for the job, they occupy different status positions and are in different departments, they play different roles and have differential access to company resources. They thus have different perceptions about power in affirmative action settings. Their need for training and empowerment, as well as their level of willingness in this regard, may differ. For this reason they should be treated as different individuals with different needs, interests and levels of motivation.

Given the heterogeneity of the present management in South African corporations, this research insight suggests that while the corporate world uses affirmative action to achieve a diverse workforce at all levels, companies have to move further to affirm diversity (Thomas, 1990). At this stage they will strive to tap the human resource potential of every member of the workforce (Roosevelt, 1990). The concern here is for employees with potential who are already in the management ranks and may soon (if not already) find themselves losing their drive, and resign because of inability on the part of senior management to manage diversity properly.

This research insight is a difficult one for management, given the present negative perceptions about South African affirmative action programmes on the part of both white and black management (Hofmeyr, 1989; Human, 1991). It demands an open-minded management that believes that learning to manage diversity is crucial and that actually managing it will make their companies more productive and more globally competitive (Roosevelt, 1990).

#### 4.3 The centrality of interpersonal relationships to empowerment.

It is not surprising that relations with superiors, colleagues and membership of corporate clubs are such reliable determinants of empowerment. Each of these sources may present opportunities to gain a specific resource for power. For instance, colleagues and club membership provide horizontal power through access to information (Yukl, 1981). Relations with the superior, especially if this is a protégé mentor kind of relationship, may influence the type of autonomy exercised on the job. This shows a paradigm shift from individual factors (expertise, educational qualification and experience): Backman *et al.*, 1968; Spekman, 1979) and

organisational factors (position power): (Popp and Muhs, 1982) to interpersonal factors as important determinants of empowerment.

The research insight suggests a renewed commitment on the part of management (black and white), but white superiors in particular, to strive for positive interpersonal relationships. It suggests that where these relationships are defined positively by the stakeholders, the participants should be rewarded openly.

Pertaining to membership of corporate clubs, the commitment should be to consultations with potential members about the venue, times, and more importantly, the language used in such clubs - probably any language of preference by participants. This may not be a tall order research insight - its success, however, depends on the preparedness of all the club members to have a working knowledge of all the official languages in the region.

Furthermore, other support networks need to be developed for people who do not feel at home in the "old boy network" of support which is part of most institutional cultures. Not everyone wishes to join the corporate club in order to be part of the institution. Appropriate alternatives are therefore called for.

Since this research also uncovered that the present job status is a reliable determinant of positive collegial and superior relationships, the latter further being positively related to influential role, the research insight has to be interpreted within its context. It suggests that management should identify and advance black managers who are ready to move up the status ladder so that they gain acceptance and support from their colleagues and superiors and therefore influence decisions at that level. Such an influential role for this group of managers should, however, be a means towards playing decisive roles within the employing organisations. This may suggest engaging in accelerated development strategies. Where company tradition entailed long periods of service before promoting individuals to senior positions, rapid career path planning may be necessary. However, such organisations may have to contend with a drop in morale from white employees who could perceive attempts at equity as reverse discrimination and feel that they have limited career chances because of the new redress measures.

Finally, although this research did not touch much on gender in affirmative action due to methodological problems outlined earlier, the position of this thesis is that affirmative action must occur within a framework that critically examines the race and gender power relations, and recognise paternalism as well as patriarchy within and across classes. In addition, it needs to be situated within the broader socio-political framework and to work towards challenging macro structures and systems. More importantly, both men and women, black and white managers have to be involved in this process; only then will both men and women, black and white, be empowered by the process of affirmative action.

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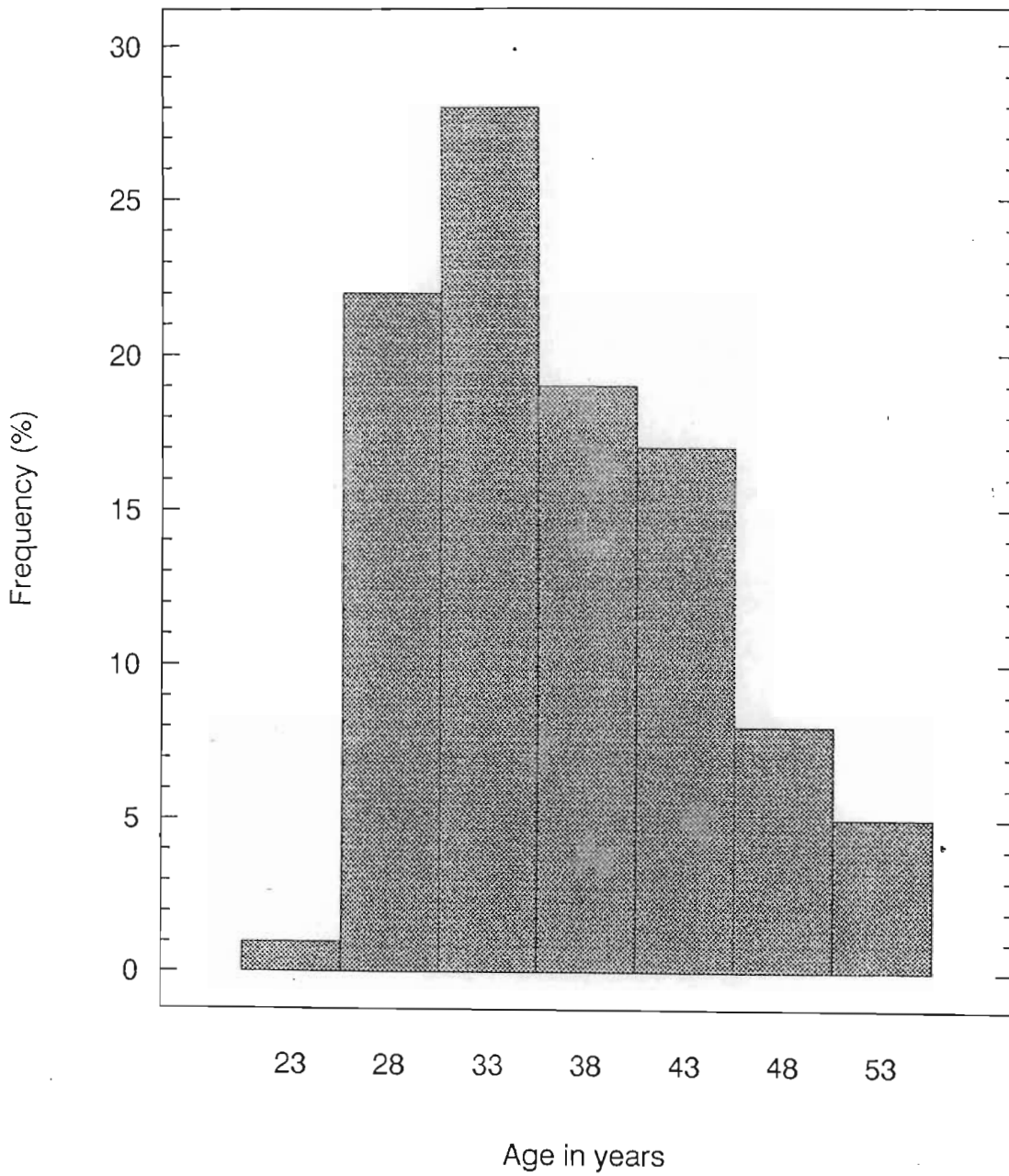
The Natal Mercury;

The Sunday Star;

Natal Witness.

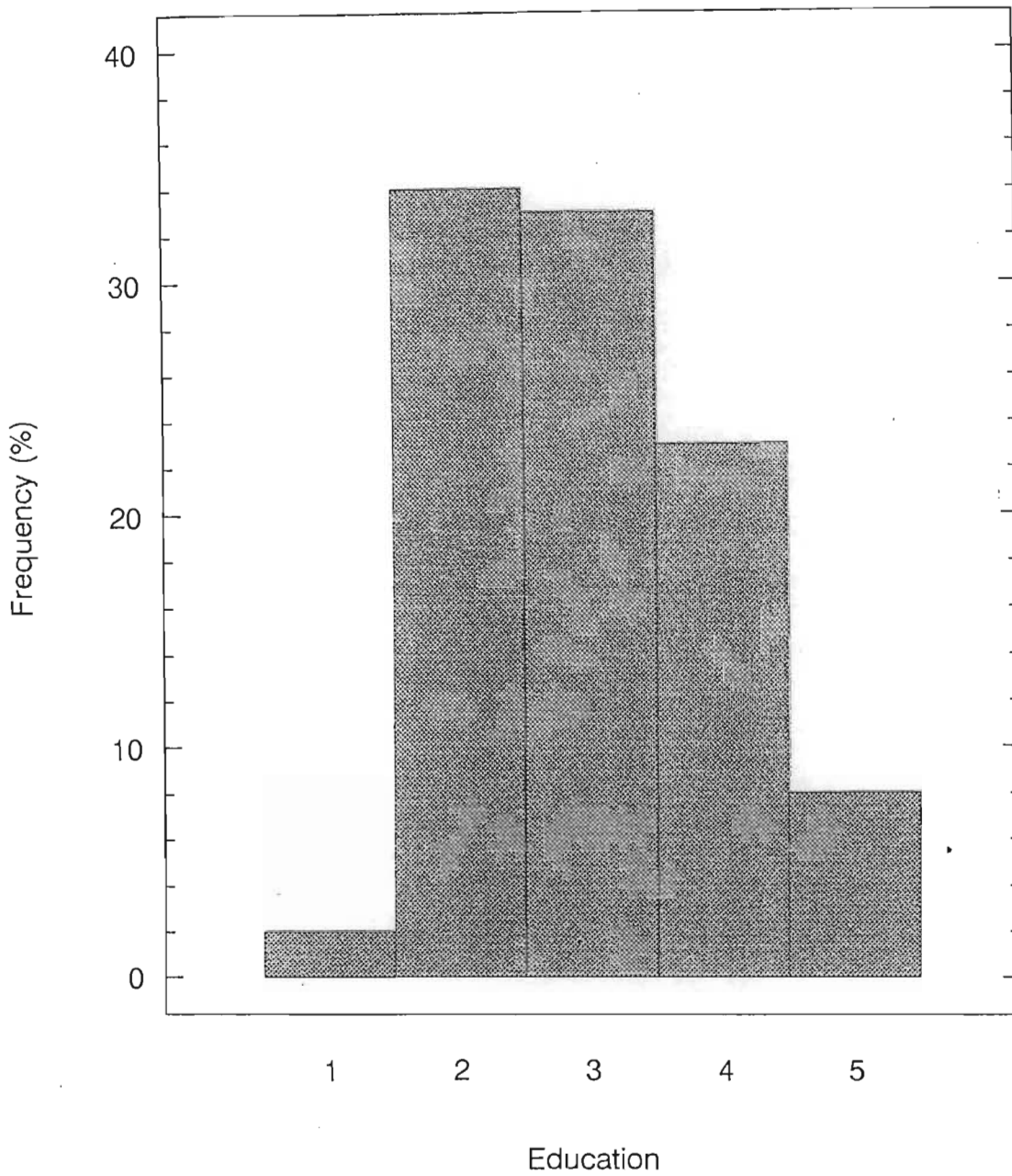
# APPENDIX 1

## Age



## APPENDIX 2

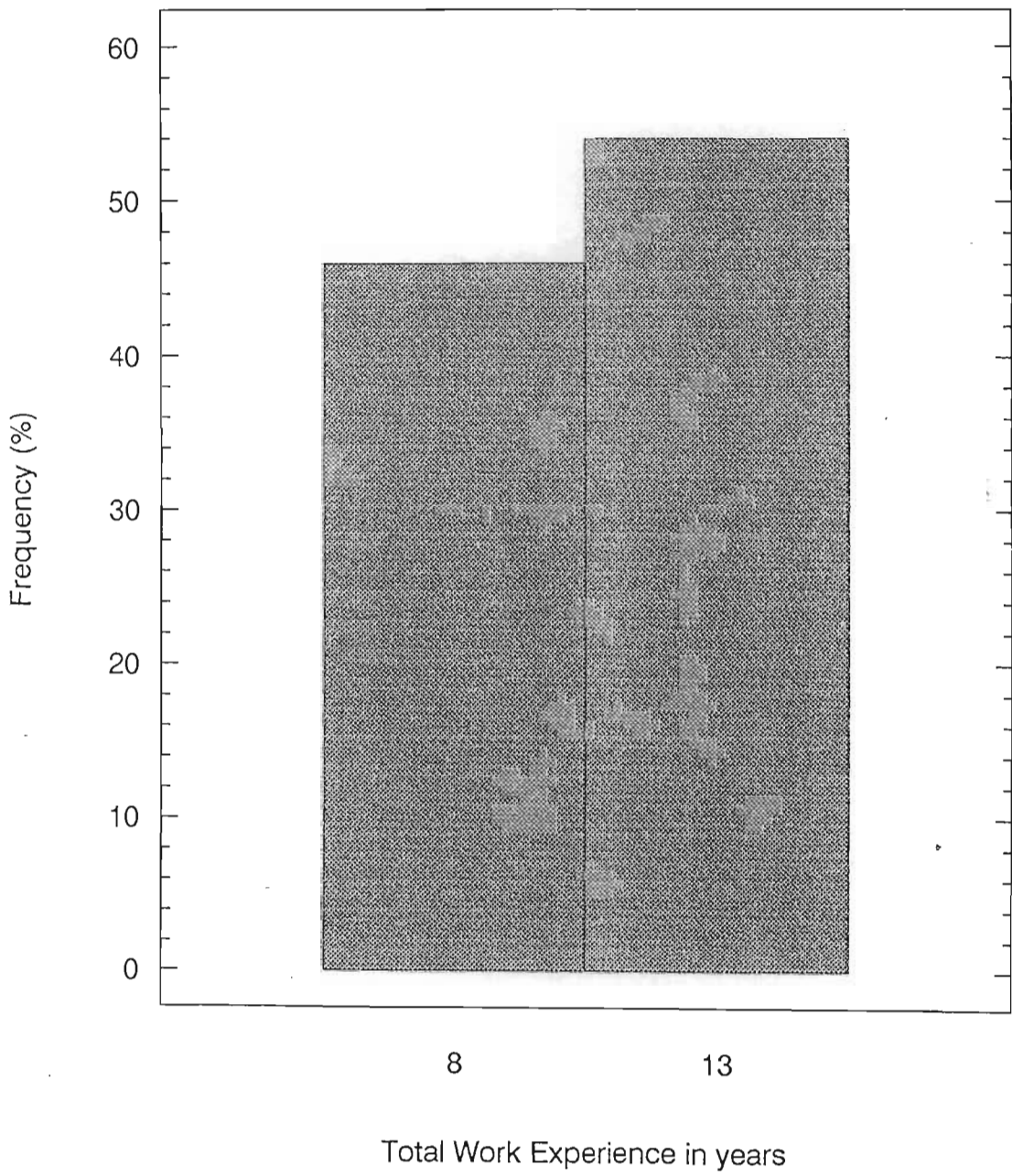
### Education



1=matric, 2=diploma, 3=degree, 4=honours, 5=masters

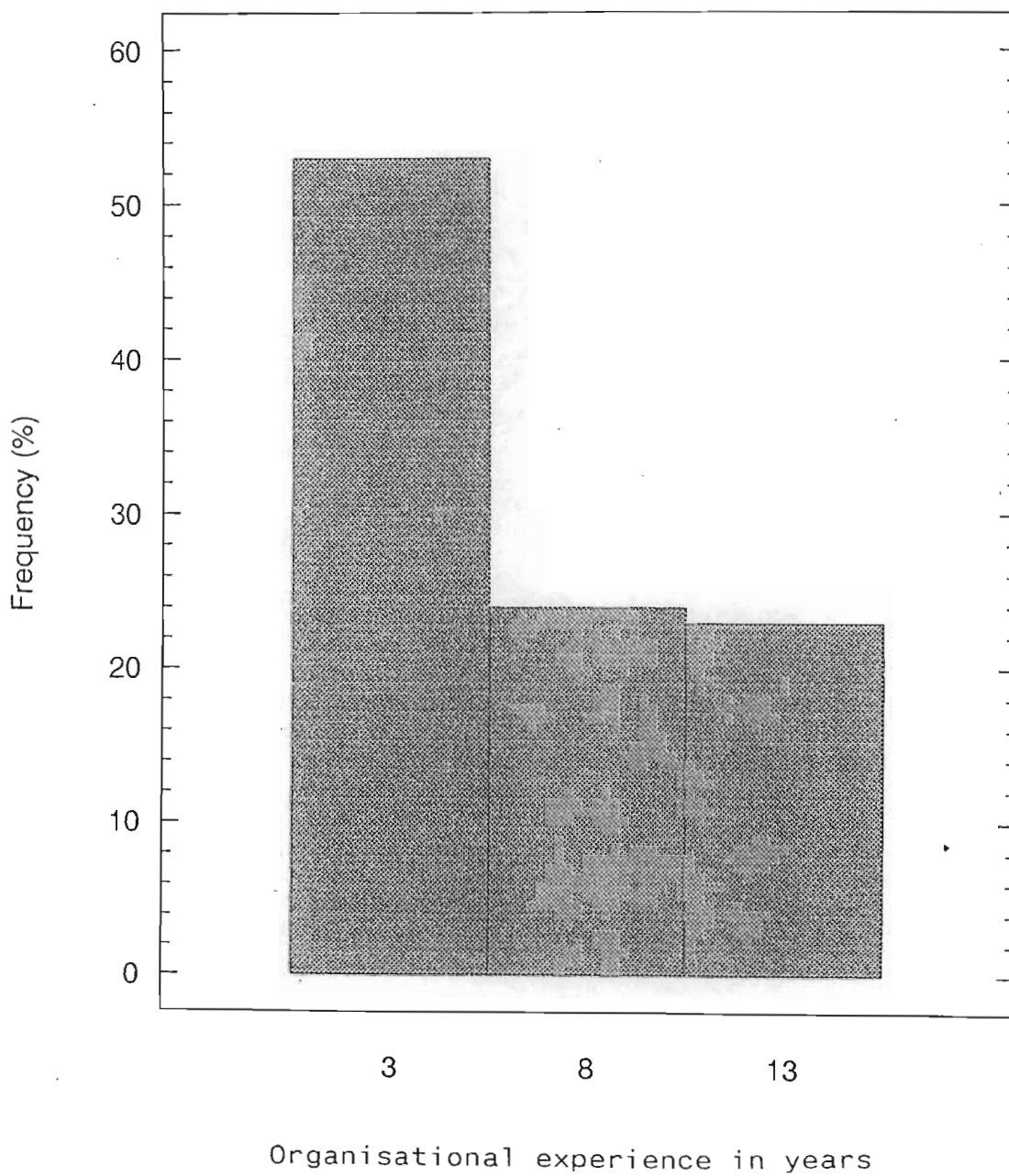
# APPENDIX 3

## Total Work Experience



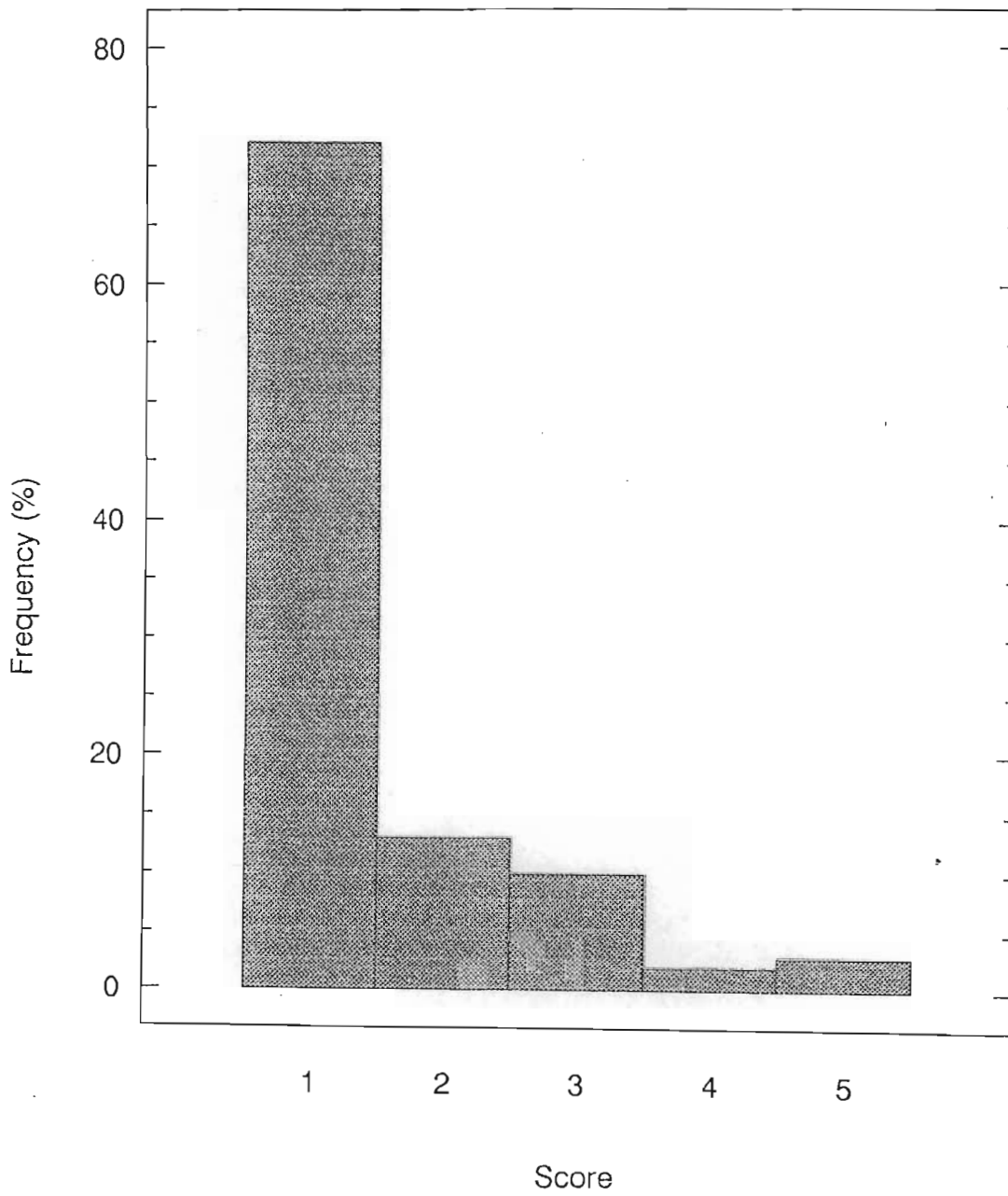
## APPENDIX 4

### Intra-Organisational Experience



## APPENDIX 5

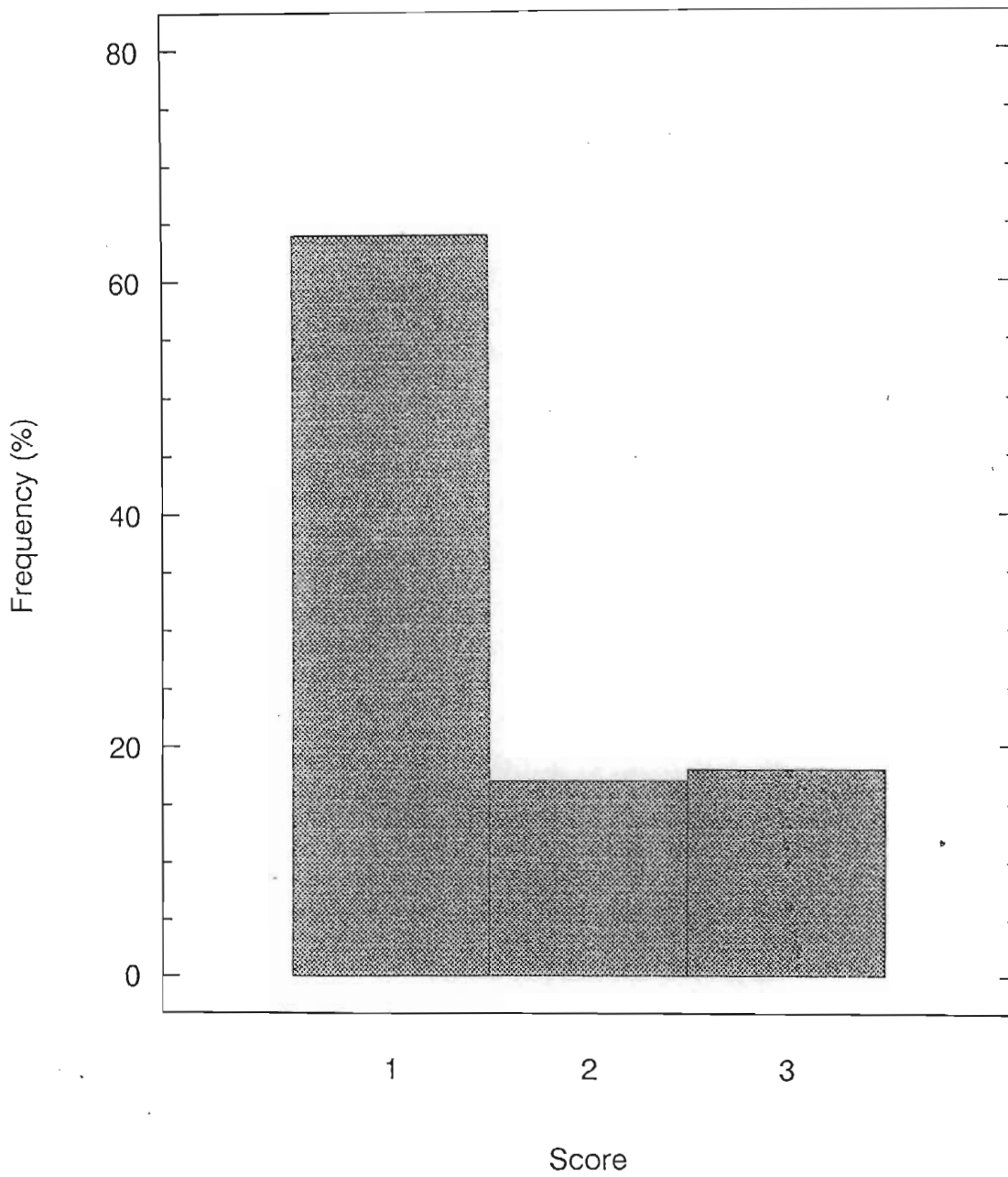
### Relationship with superiors



1=positive, 2=lukewarm, 3=unsure, 4=none, 5=negative

## APPENDIX 6

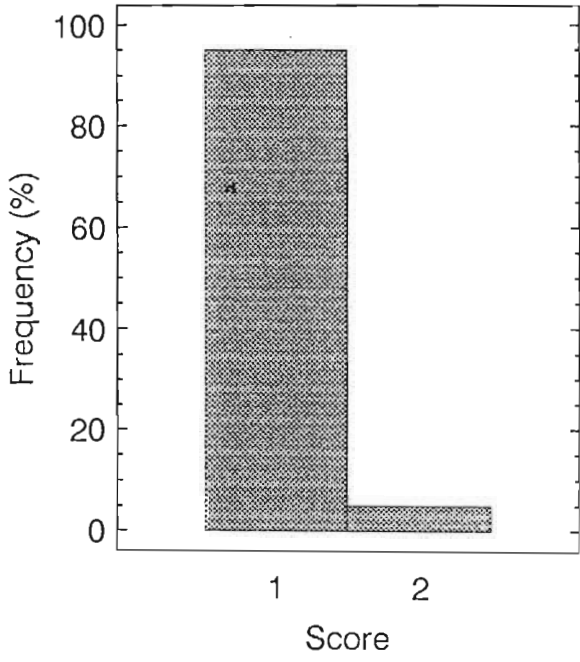
### Relationship with Colleagues



1=positive, 2=lukewarm, 3=difficult to assess

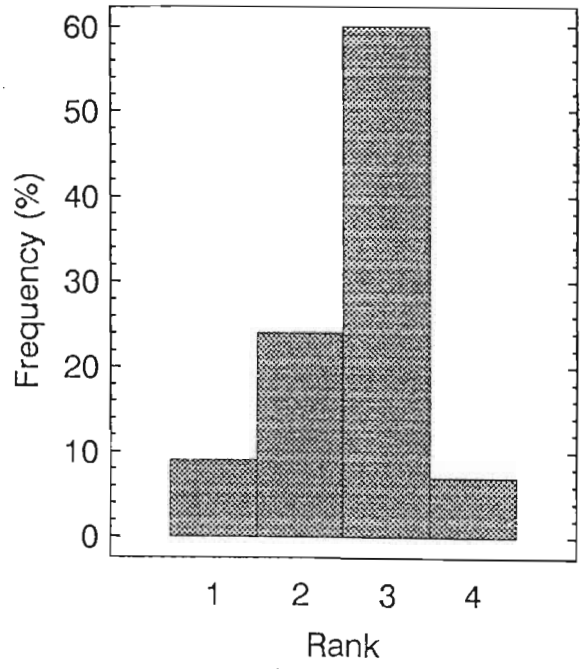
APPENDIX 7

Gender of Ally



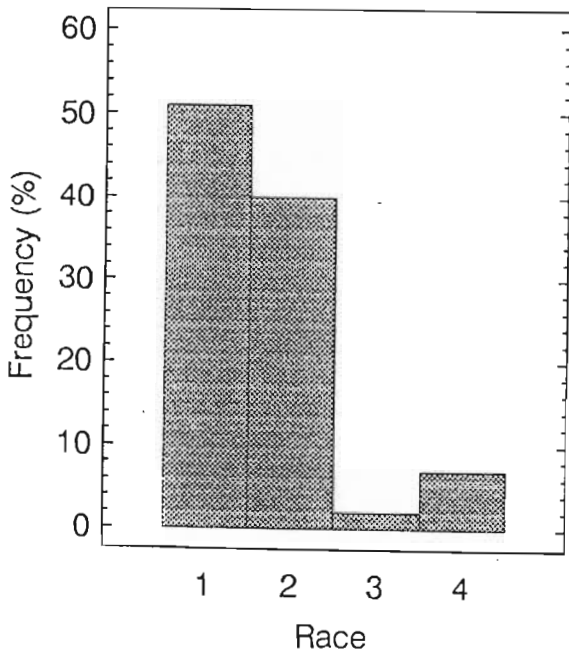
1=male, 2=female

Status of Ally



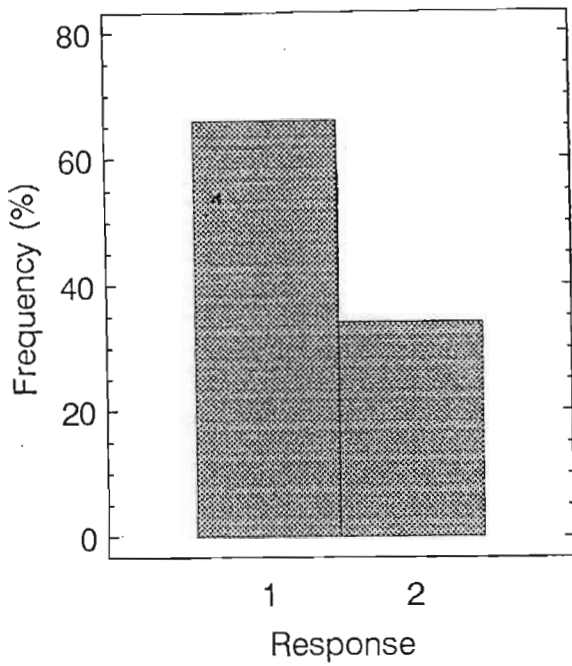
1=executive, 2=snr. manag,  
3=mid manag, 4=low manag

Race of Ally



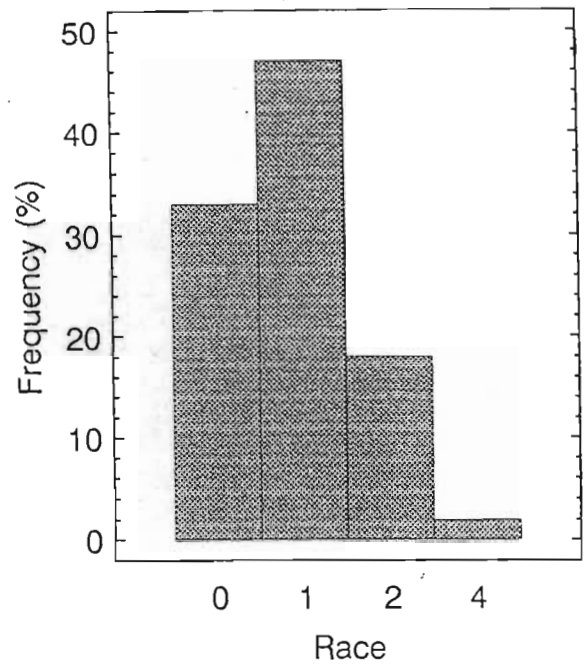
1=black, 2=white, 3=coloured, 4=indian, 5=other

APPENDIX 8  
Do you have a mentor?



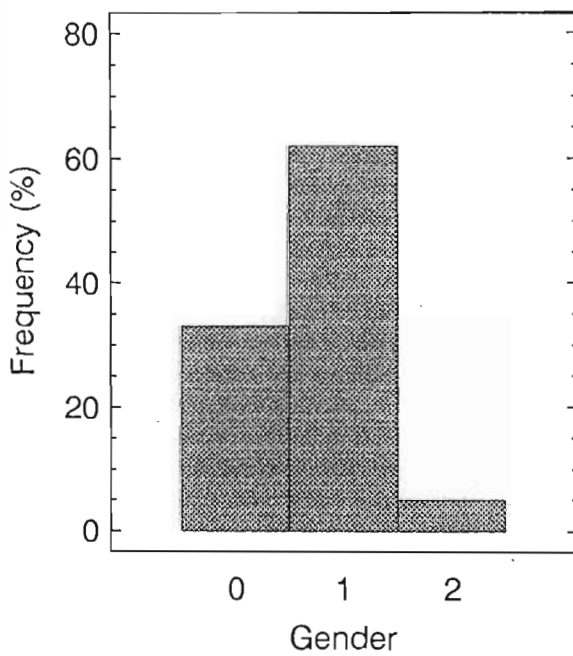
1=yes, 2=no

Race of Mentor



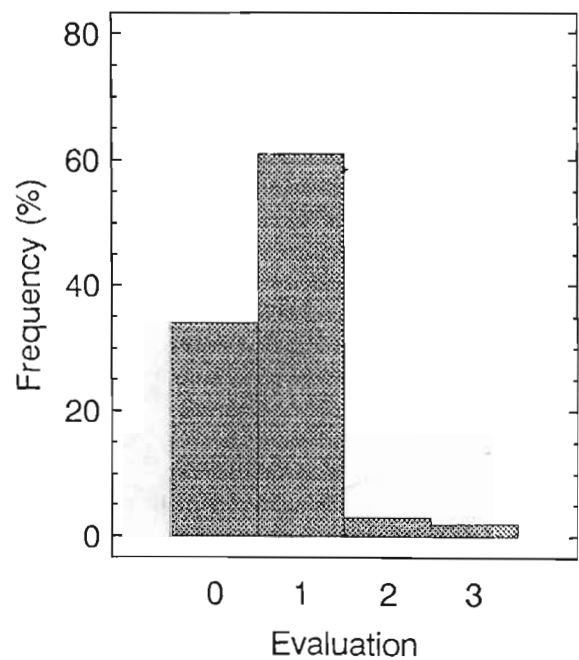
0=none, 1=white, 2=black, 4=coloured

Gender of Mentor



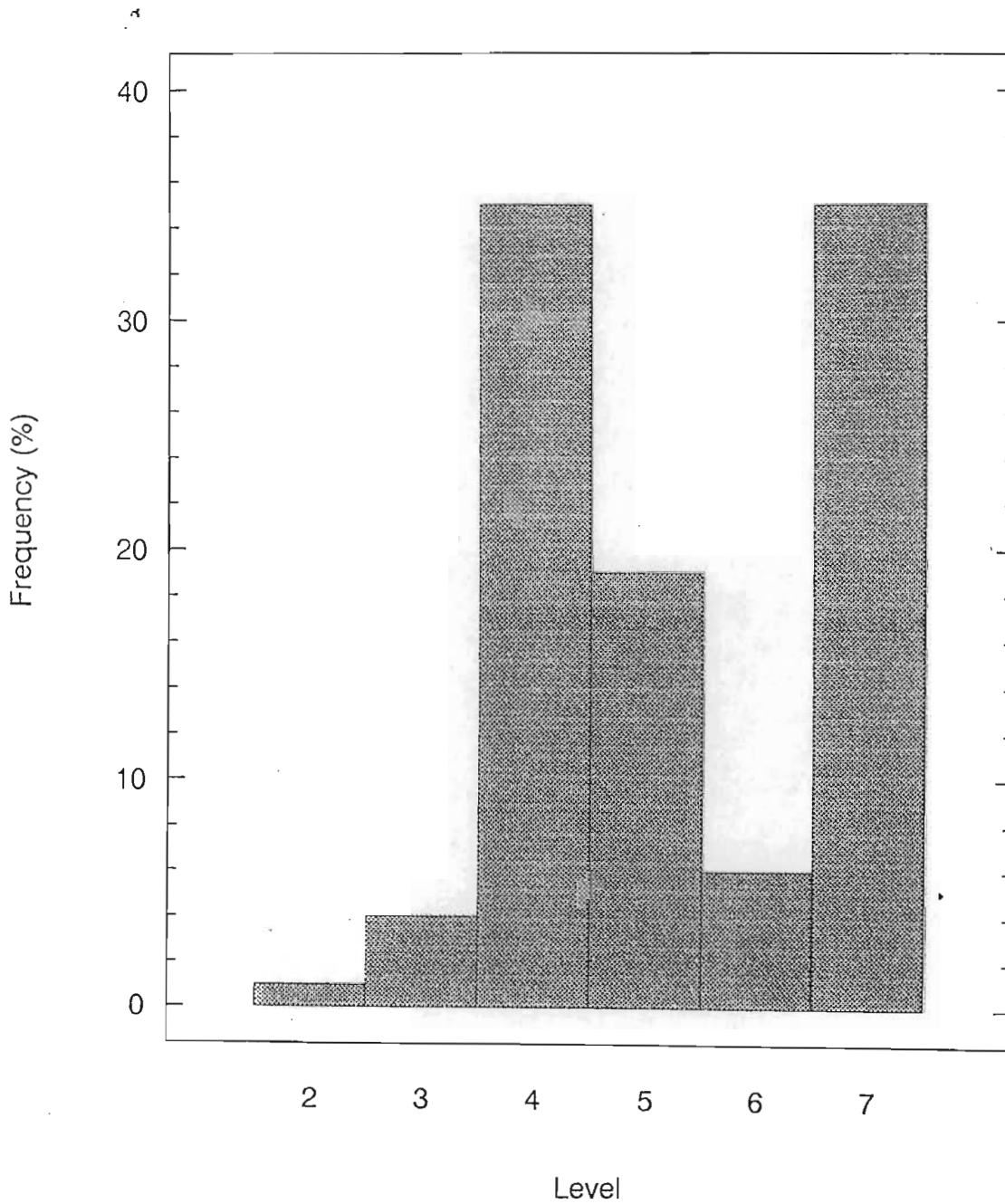
0=none, 1=male, 2=female

Evaluation of Mentor Relationship



1=meaningful, 2=unsure, 3=not meaningful

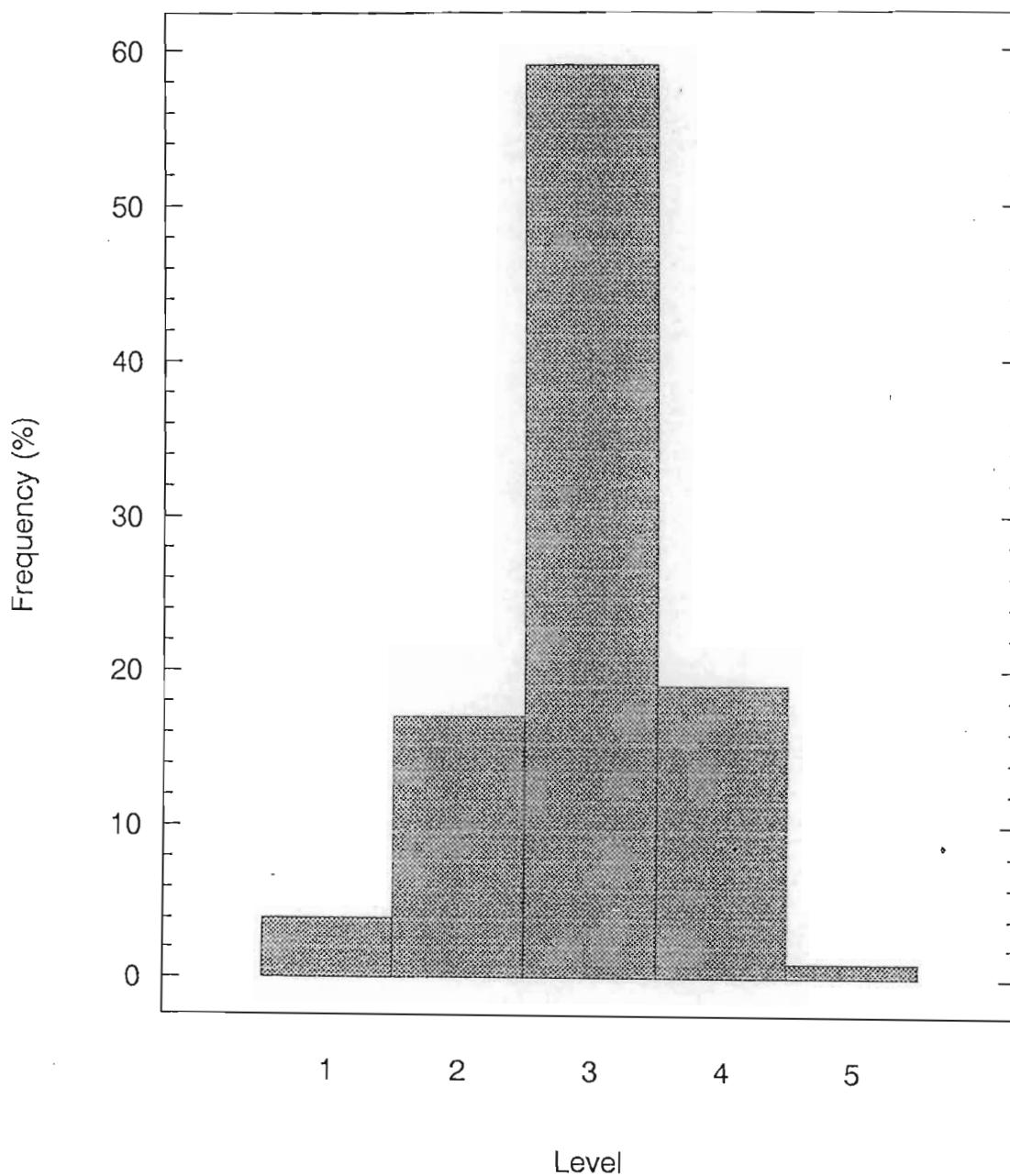
## APPENDIX 9 First Appointment



1=executive, 2=snr man, 3=mid man, 4=low man,  
5=prof, 6=tech, 7=other

## APPENDIX 10

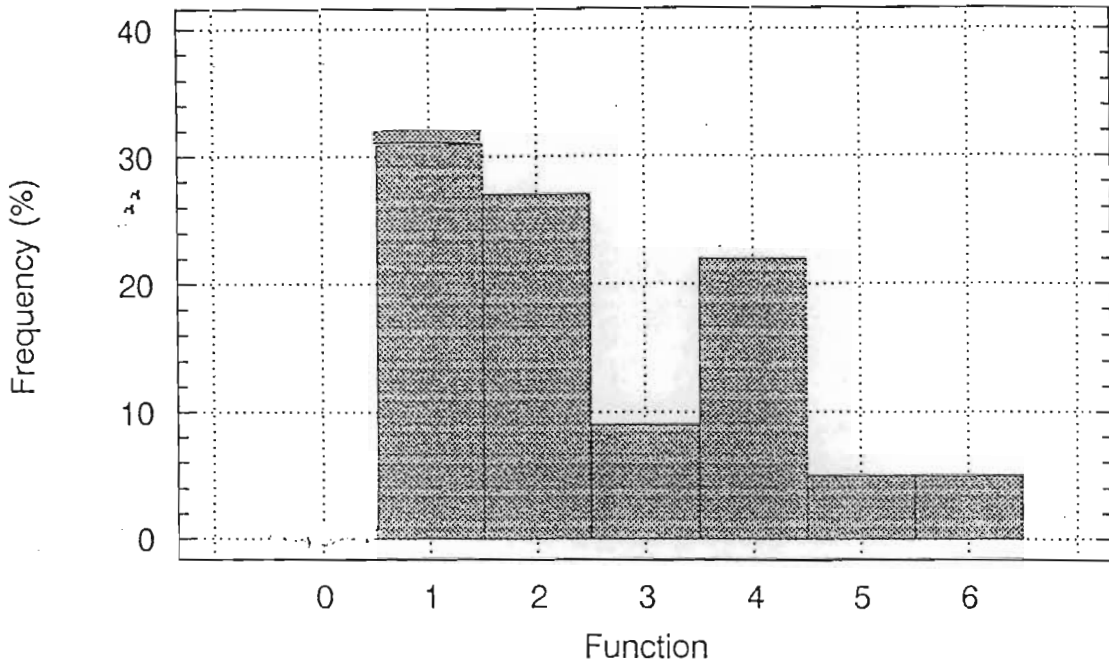
### Current Appointment



1=executive, 2=snr man, 3=mid man, 4=low man, 5=professional

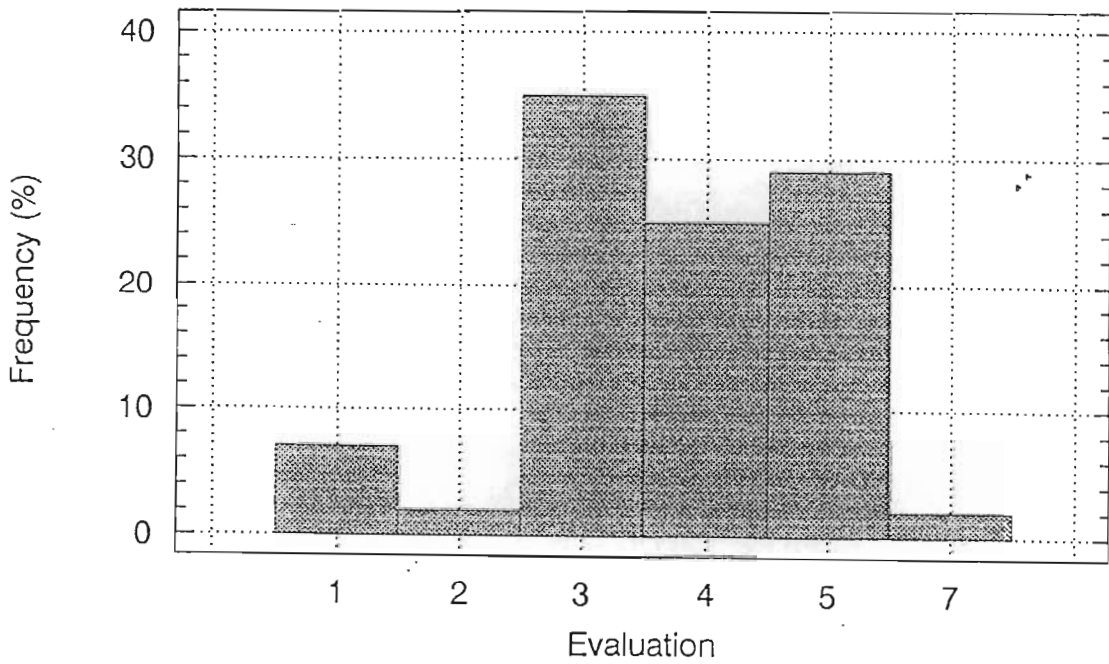
# APPENDIX 11

## Function of Dept. of Employment



1=staff, 2=service, 3=produce, 4=market, 5=finance, 6=other

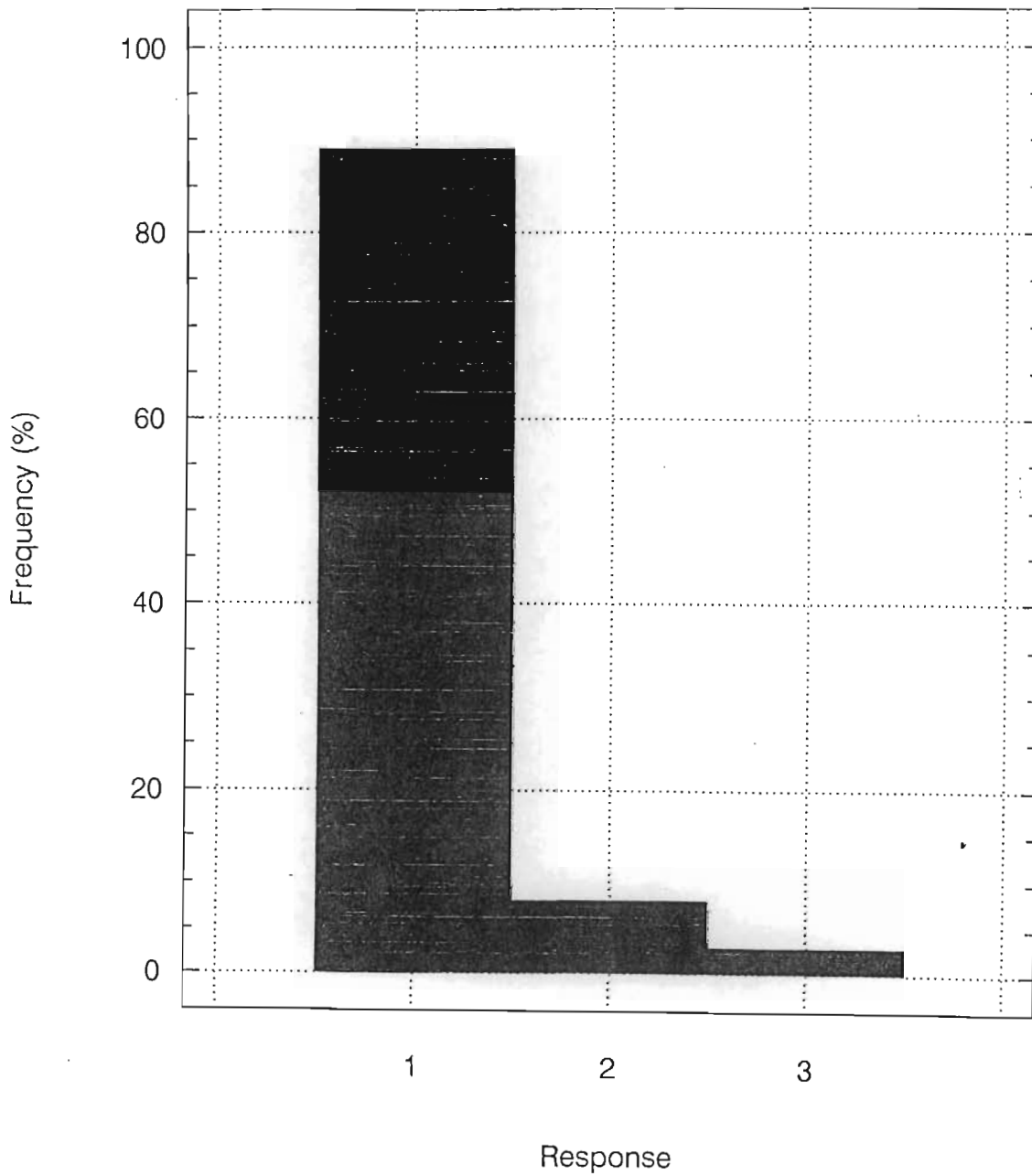
## Evaluation of Dept.



1=staff, 2=service, 3=produce, 4=market, 5=finance, 7=other

# APPENDIX 12

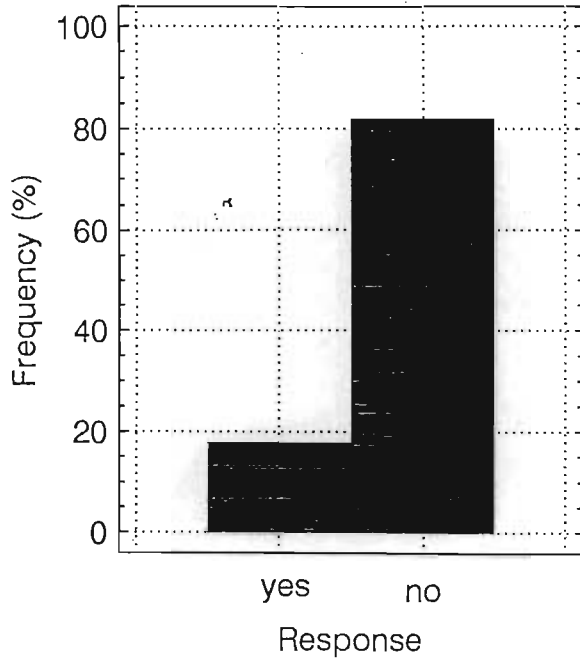
## Visibility



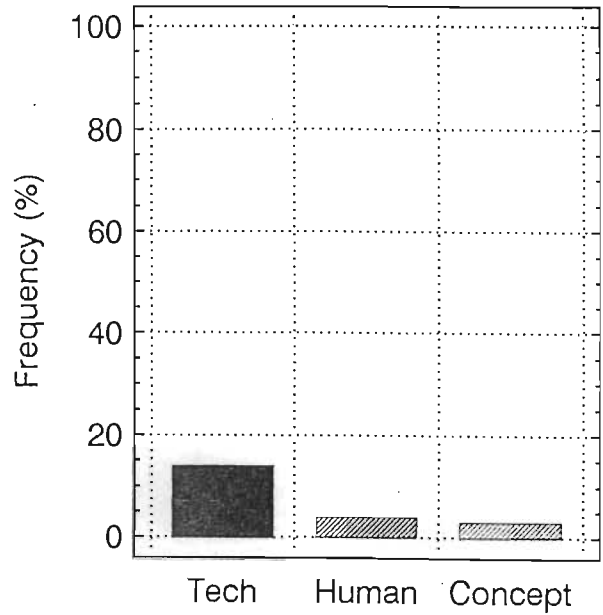
1=known, 2=don't know, 3=not known

# APPENDIX 13

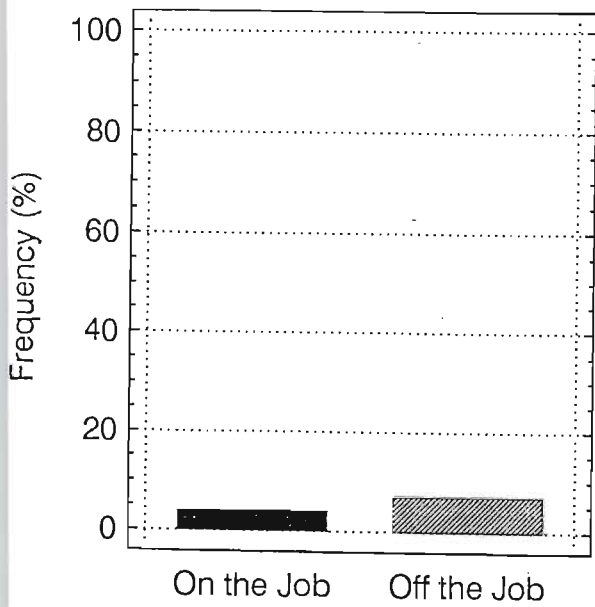
Do you think you are adequately trained?



Where are you inadequately trained?

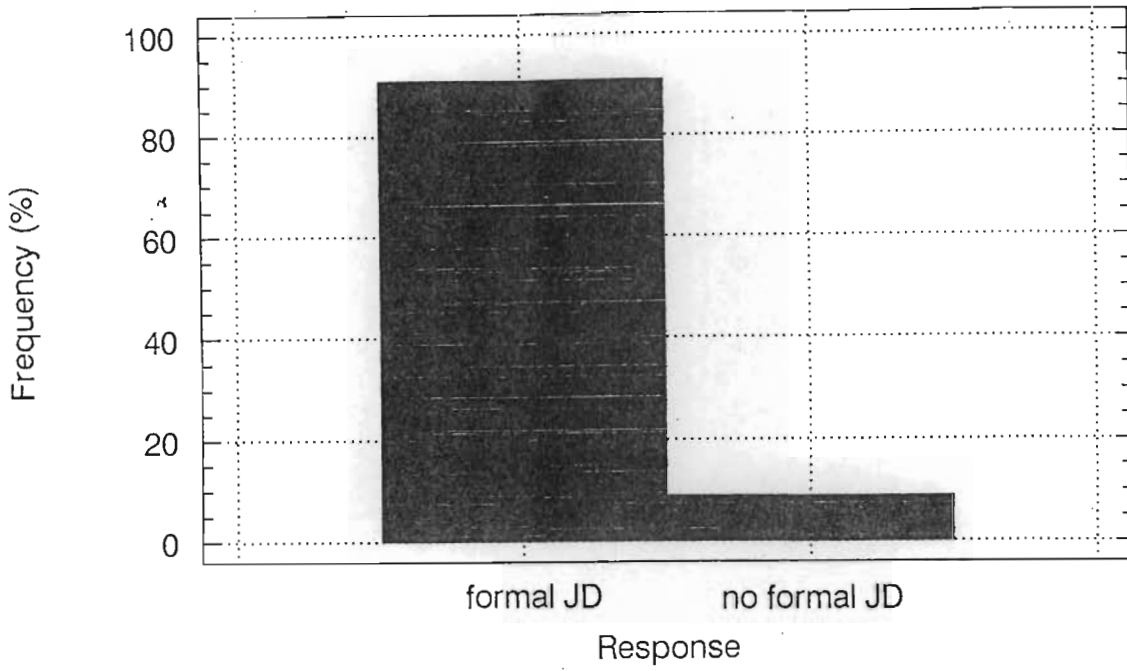


How can you acquire such skills?

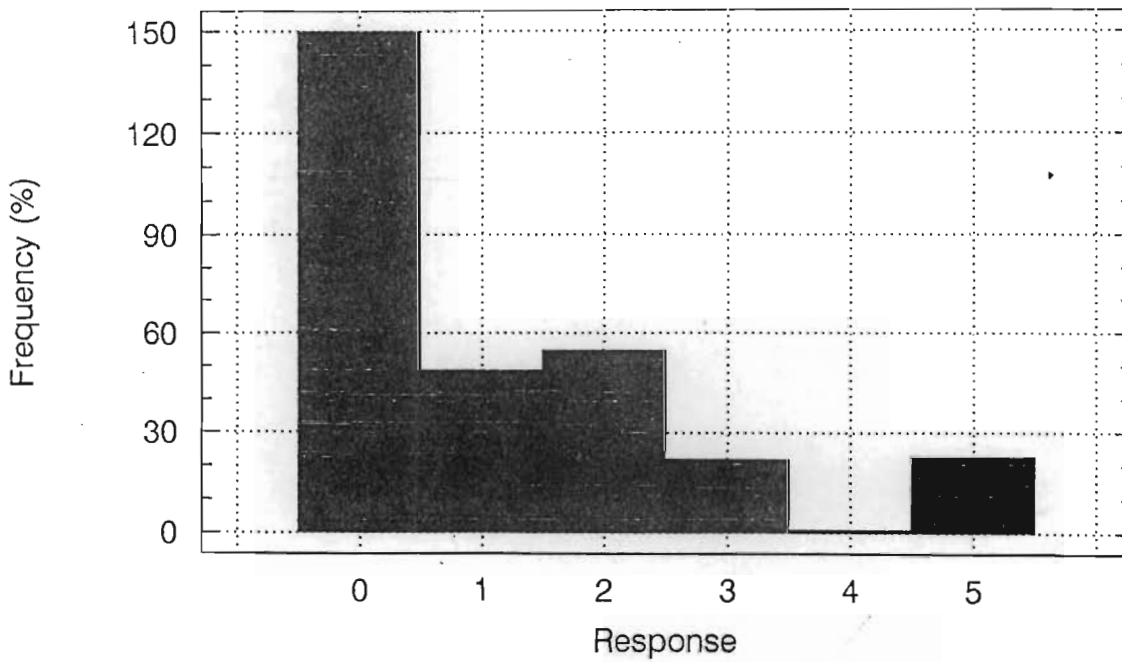


APPENDIX 14

Job Description



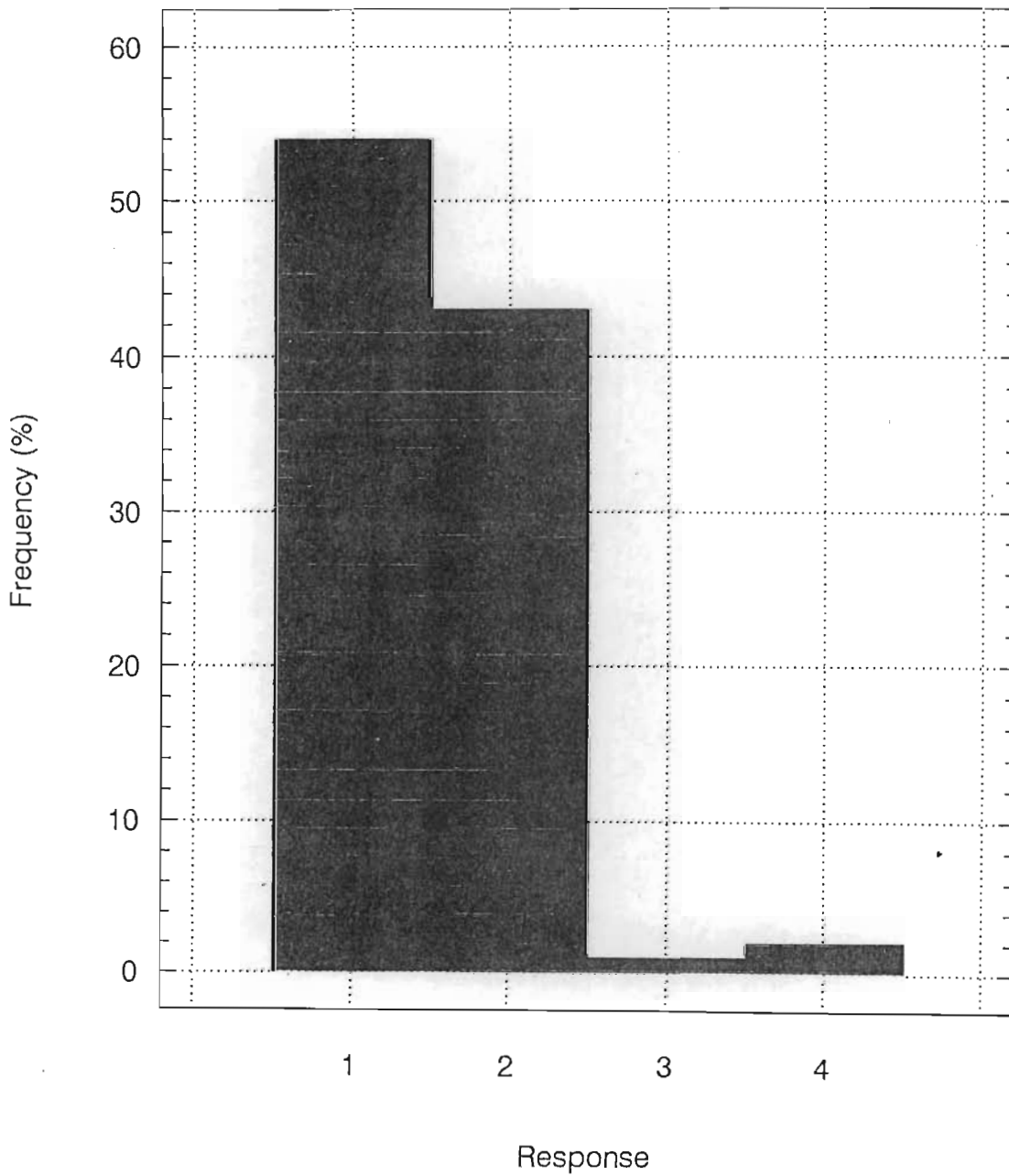
Who developed your job description?



0=no JD, 1=self, 2=superior, 3=predecessor, 4=uncertain, 5=other

# APPENDIX 15

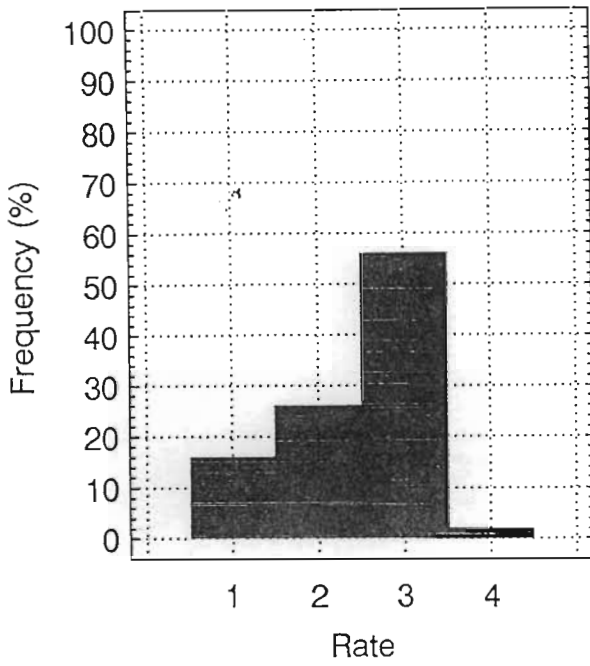
Did you expect your promotion to give you any decision-making powers?



1 = full, 2 = some, 3 = uncertain, 4 = no

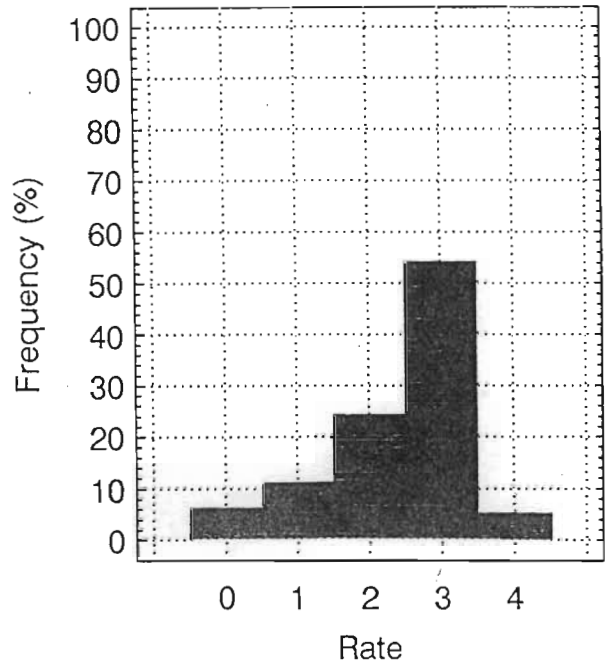
# APPENDIX 16 -Advancement

In relation to white colleagues

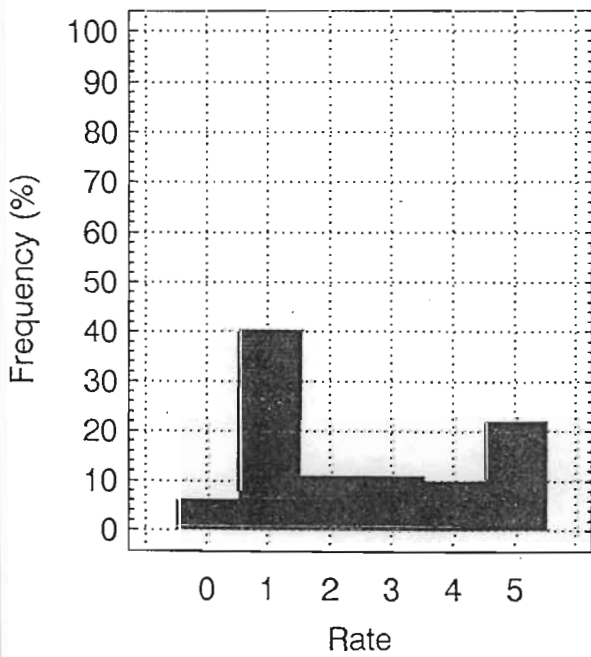


1=faster, 2=same, 3=slower, 4=unknown

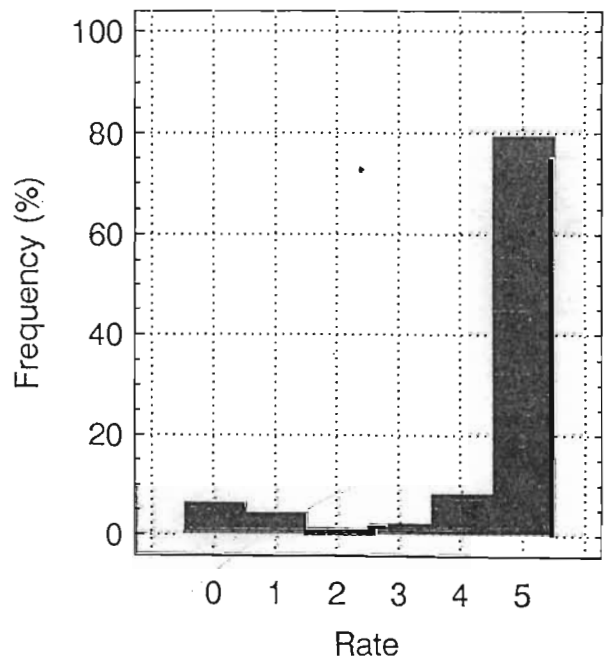
In relation to white male colleagues



In relation to white female colleagues

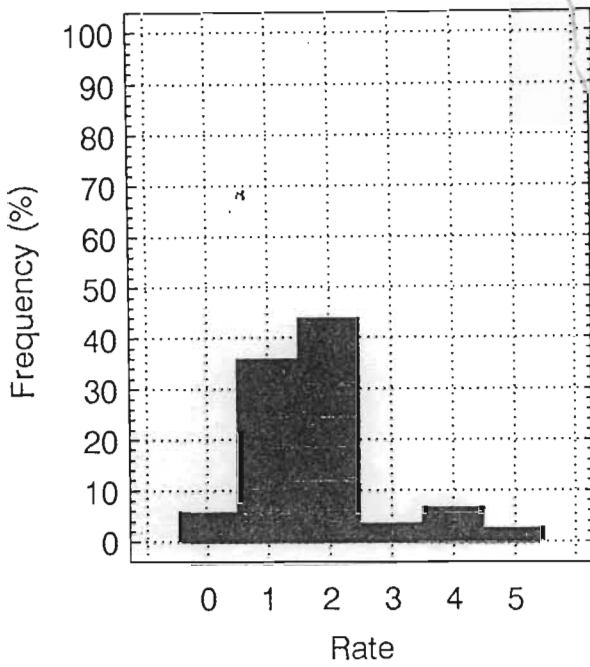


In relation to black female colleagues

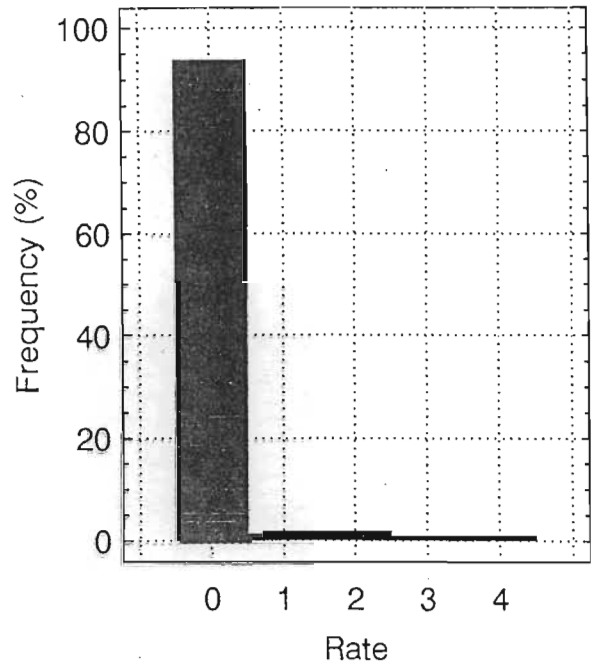


APPENDIX 16 -cntd.

In relation to black male colleagues

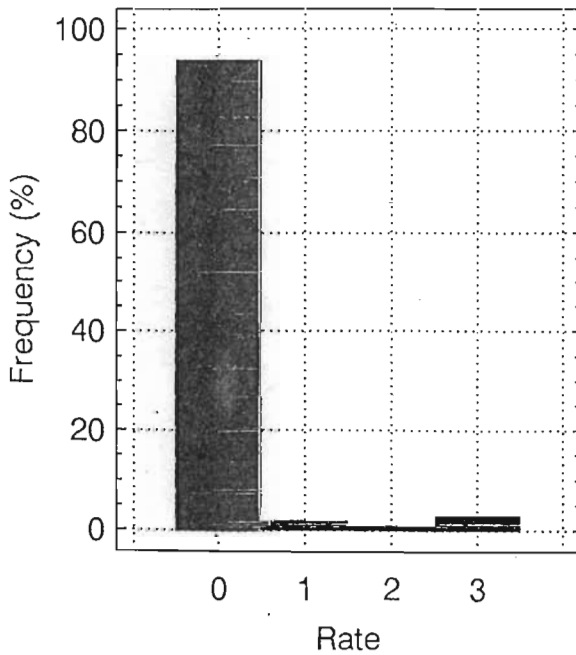


Women in relation to black male

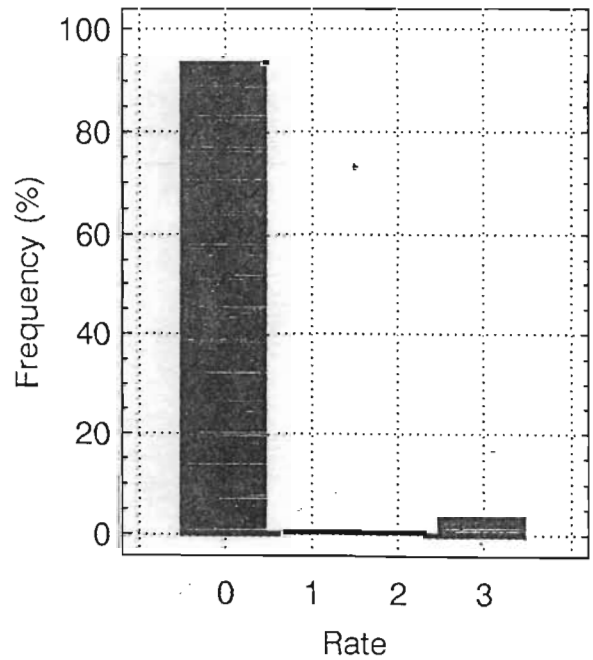


0=no adv., 1=faster, 2=same, 3=slower, 4=unknown

Women to white female coll

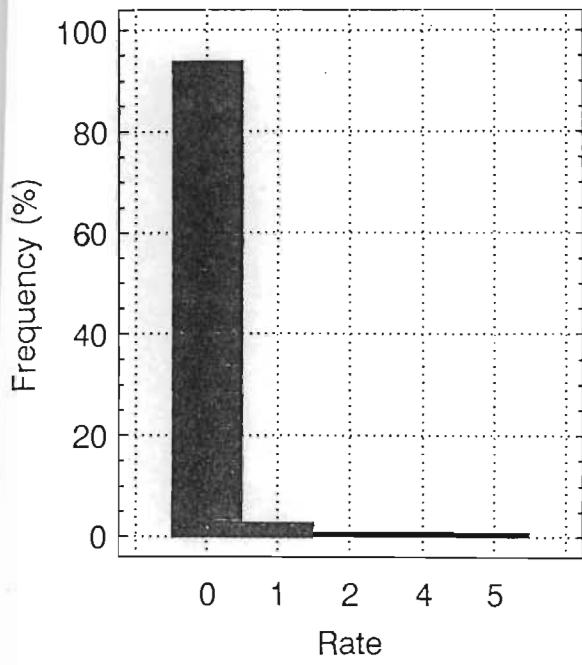


Women to white male coll.



APPENDIX 16 -cntd.

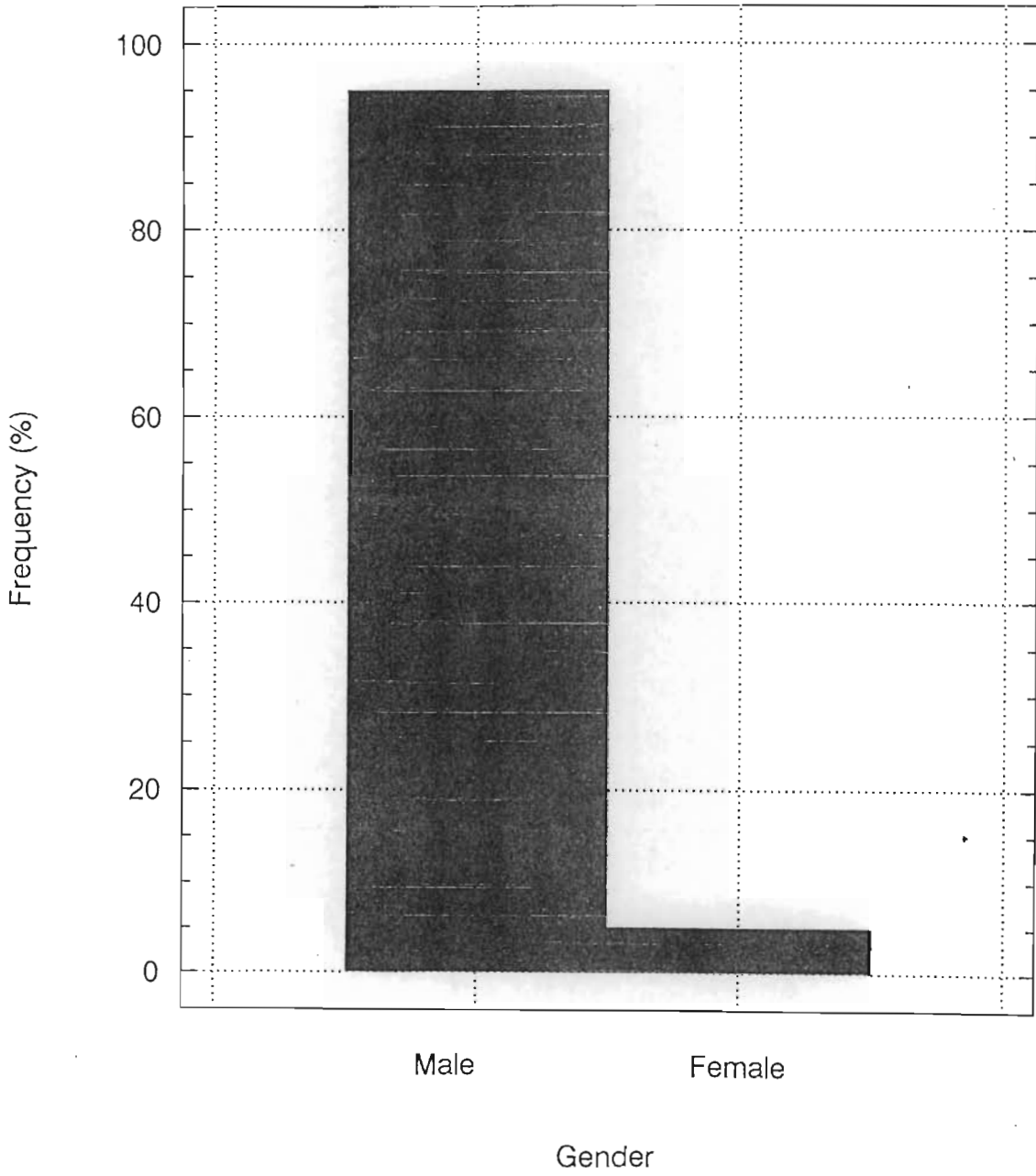
Women to black female colleagues



0=none, 1=faster, 2=same, 3=slower, 4=unknown

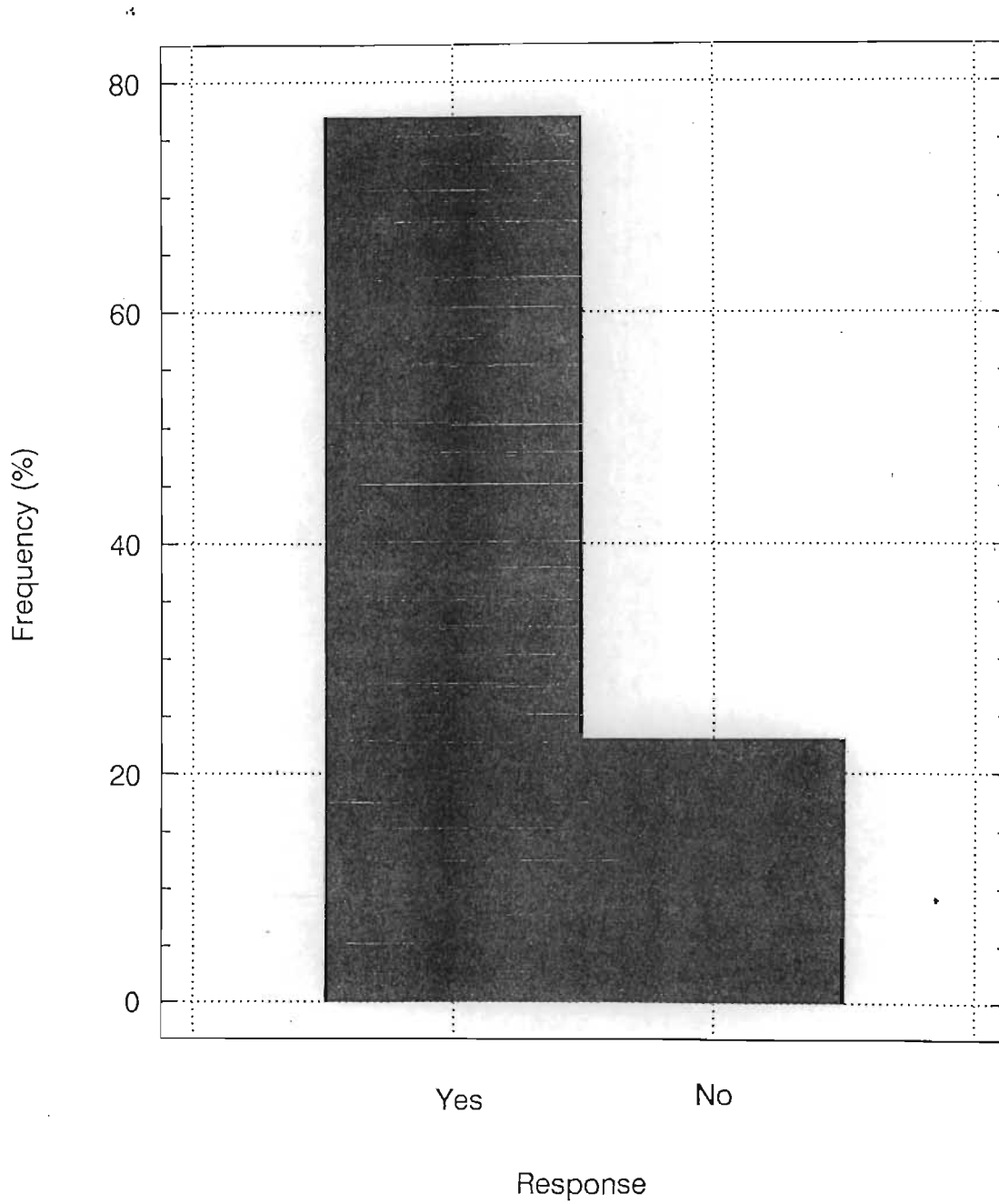
# APPENDIX 17

## Gender



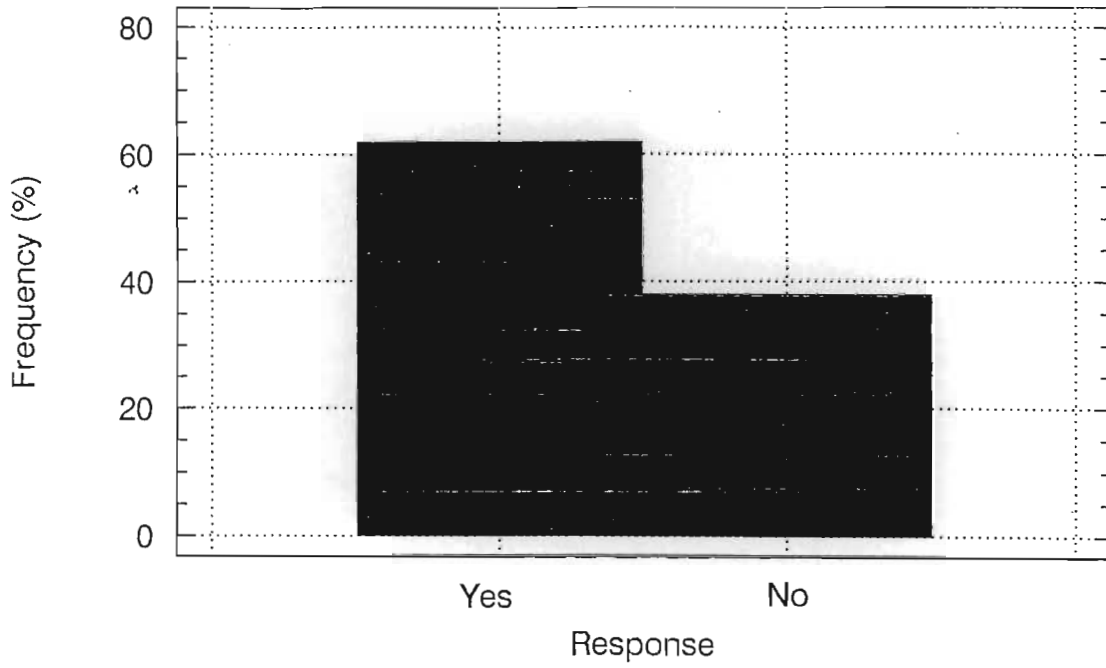
# APPENDIX 18

## Are there any Corporate Clubs?

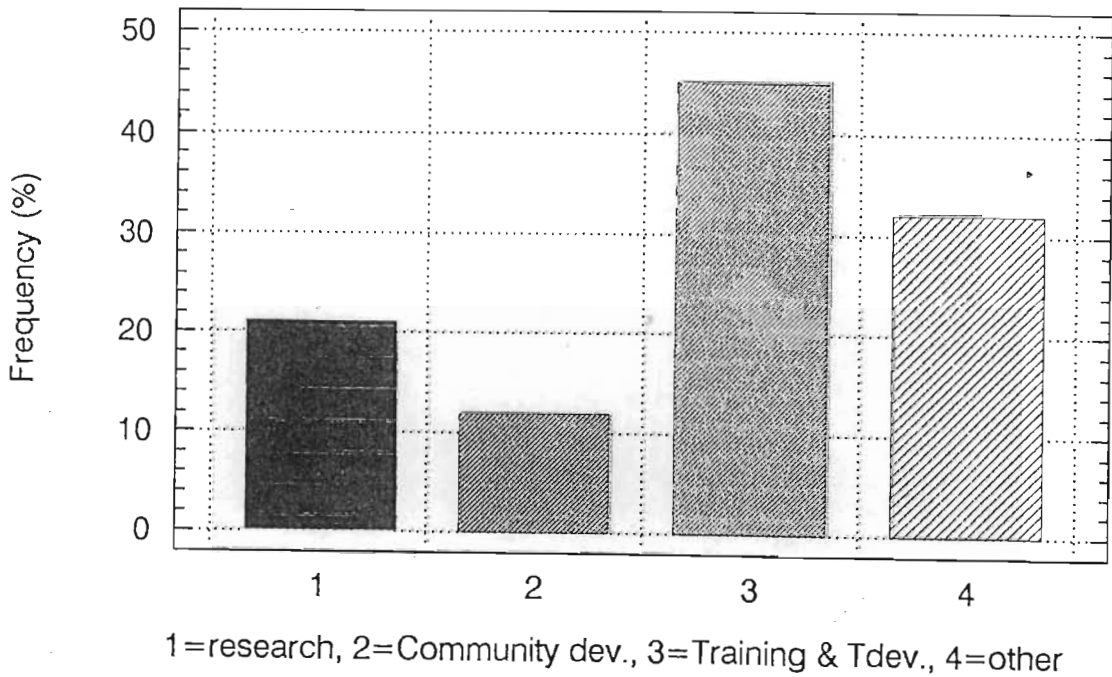


# APPENDIX 19

## Projects

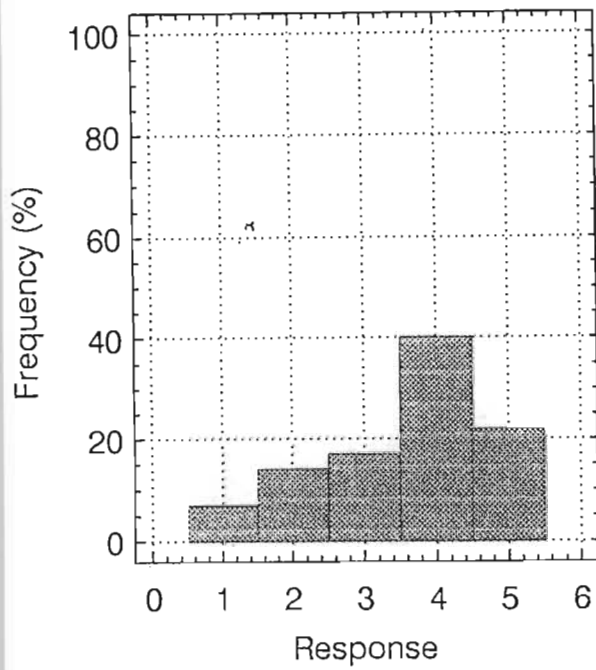


## Type of project

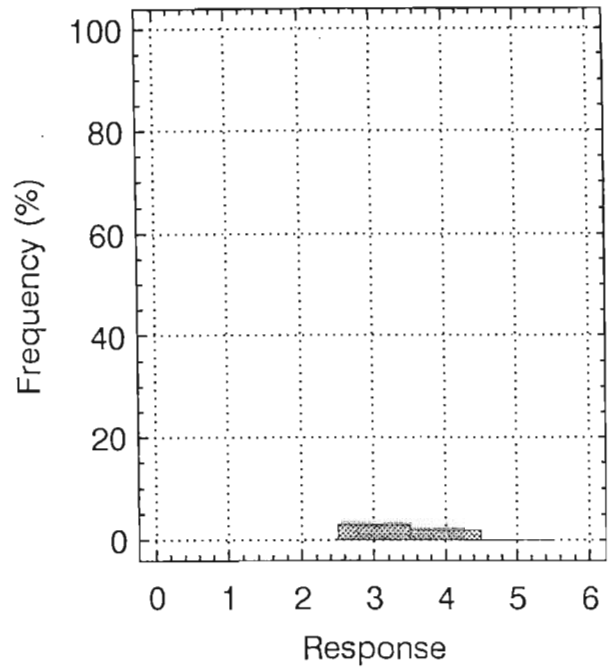


Reasons for appointment

Black

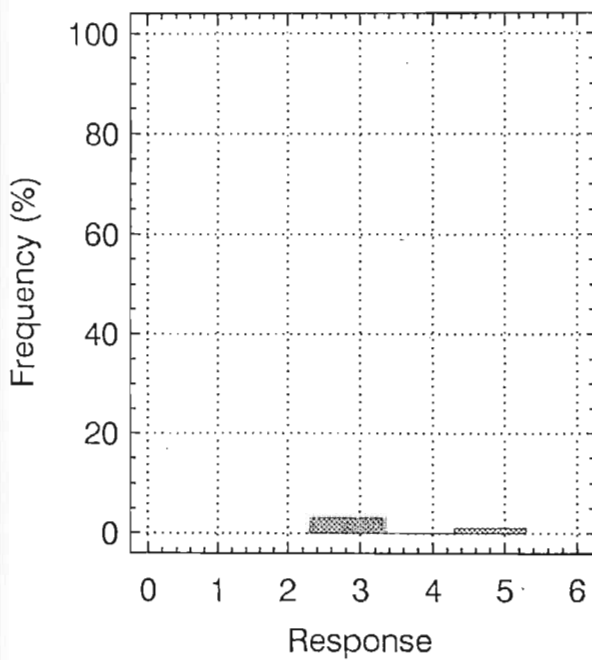


Women

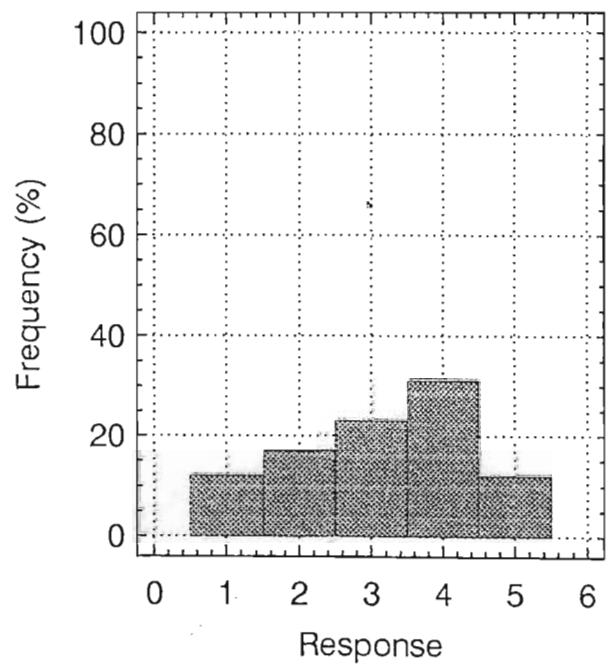


1=very unimportant,2=unimp,3=neither,4=imp,5=very imp,6=N/A

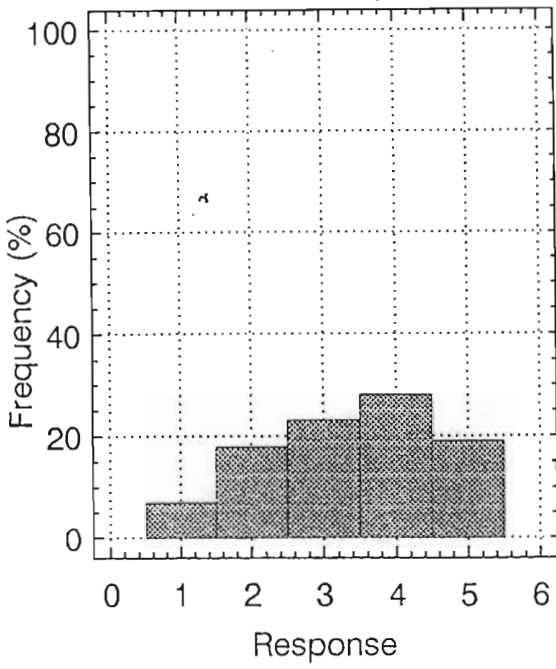
Black Women



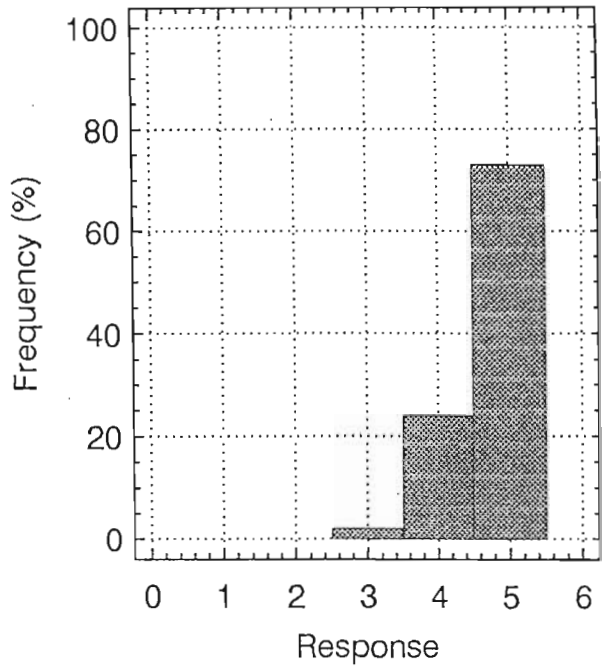
Men



Black Man

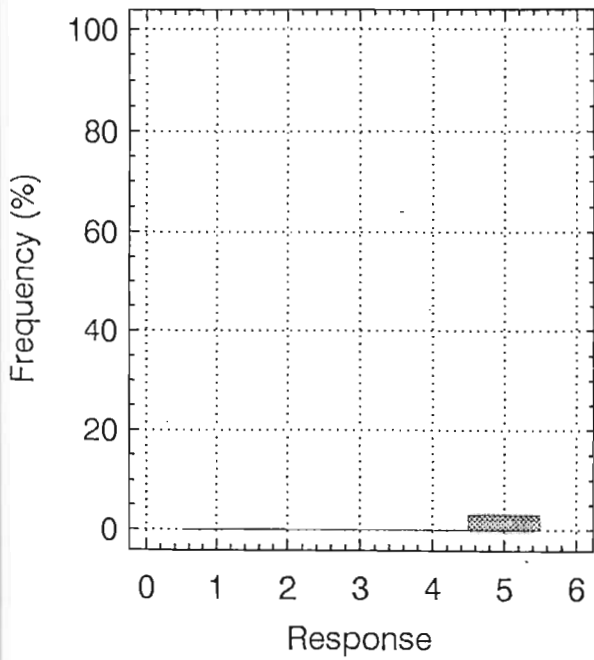


Merit



1=very imp., 2=unimp., 3=neither, 4=imp., 5=very imp., 6=n/A

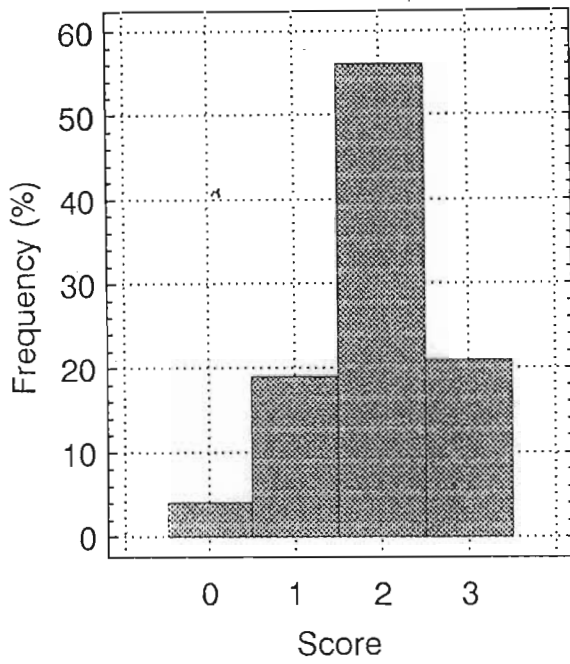
Other



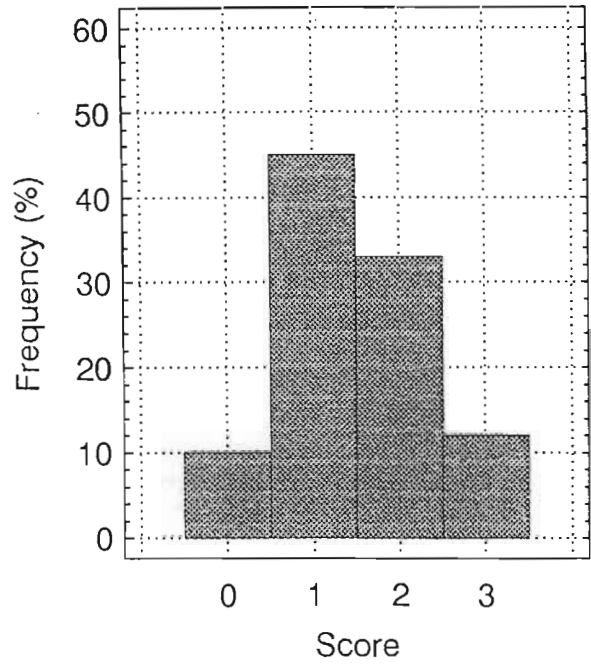
# APPENDIX 21

## Factors for Promotion

### Organisational

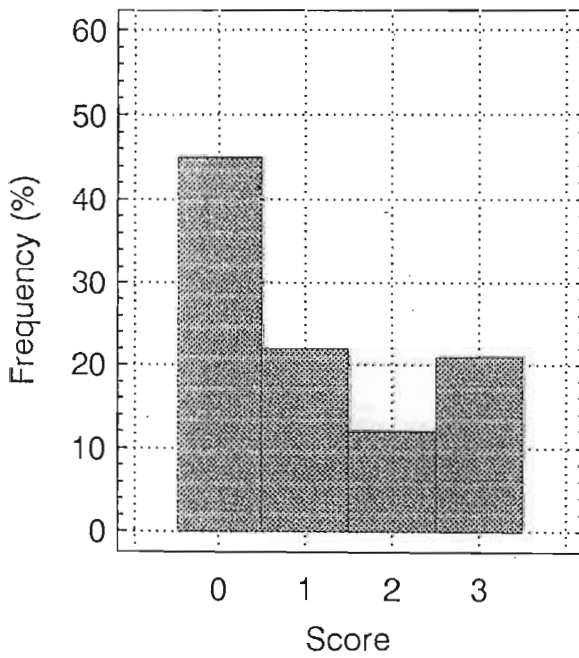


### Individual



1=organisational, 2=individual, 3=political

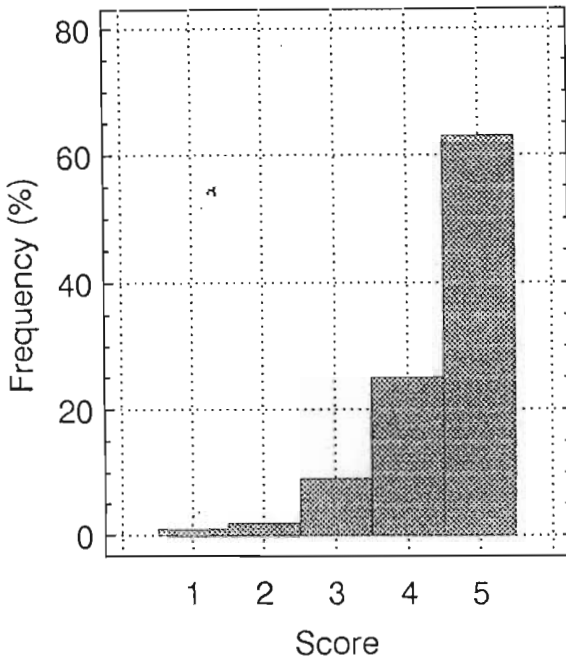
### Political



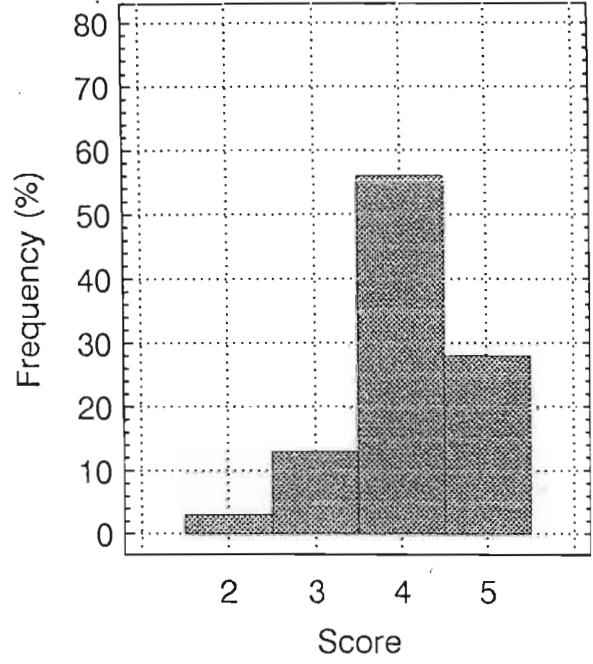
# APPENDIX 22

## Factors for Job Success

### Effort

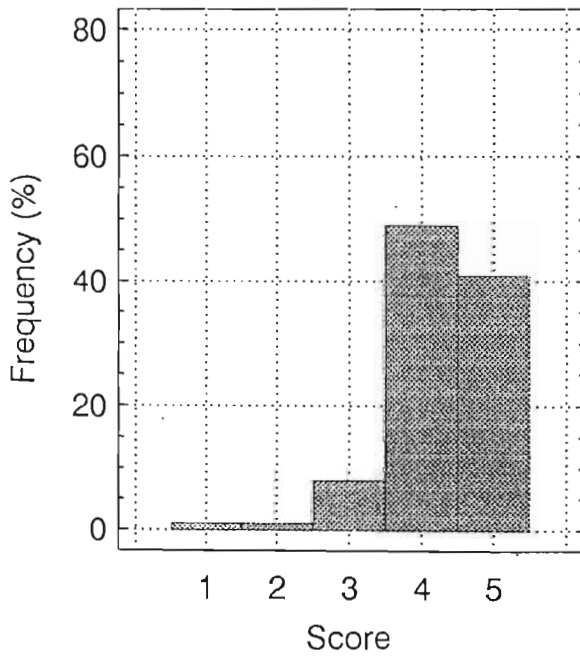


### Qualifications

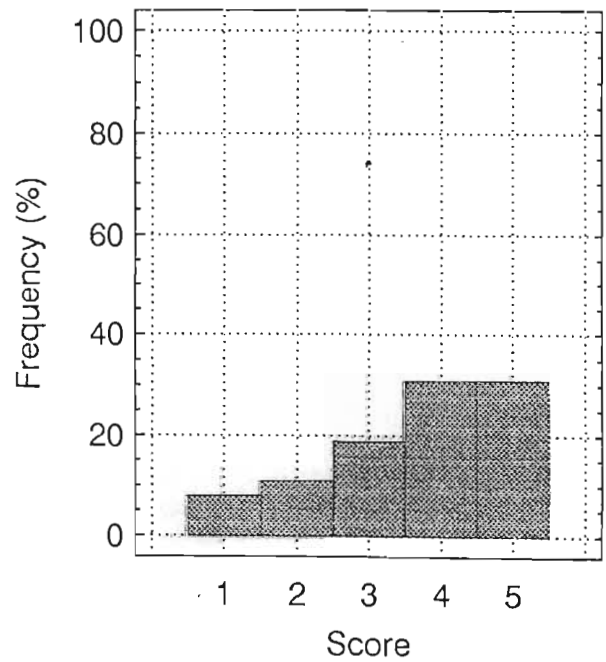


1=very unimportant, 2=unimp, 3=neither, 4=imp, 5=very imp

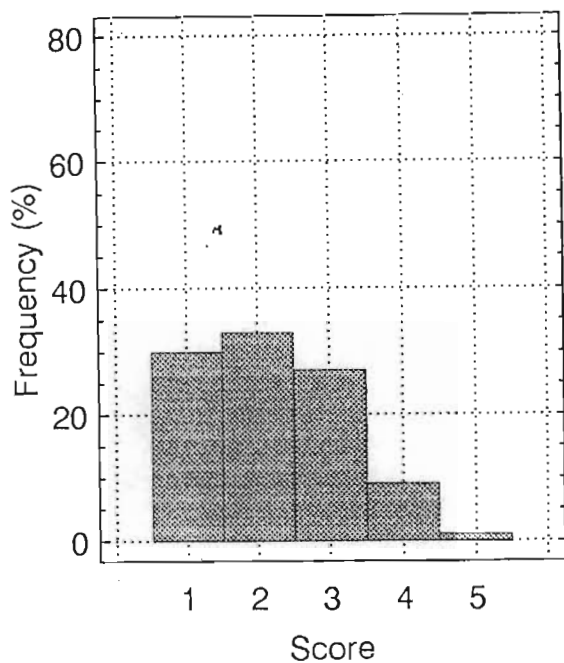
### Experience



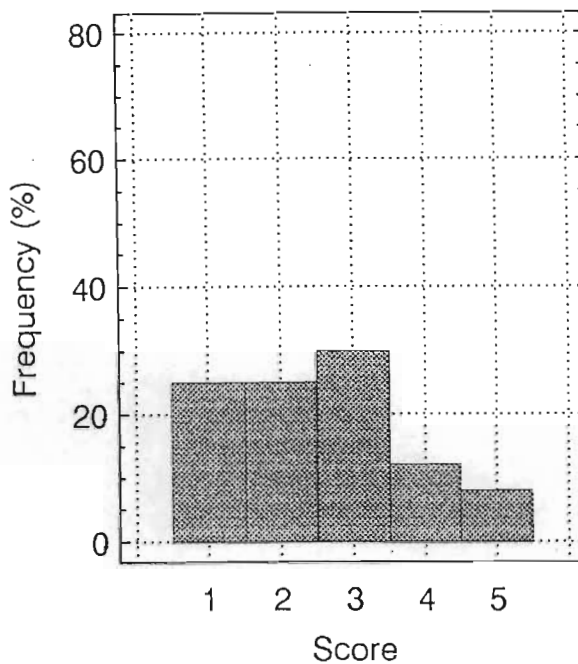
### Connections



Luck

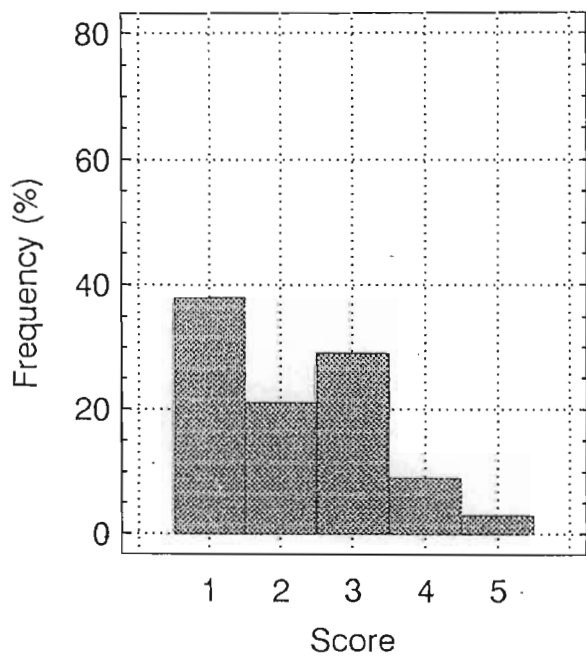


Heritage

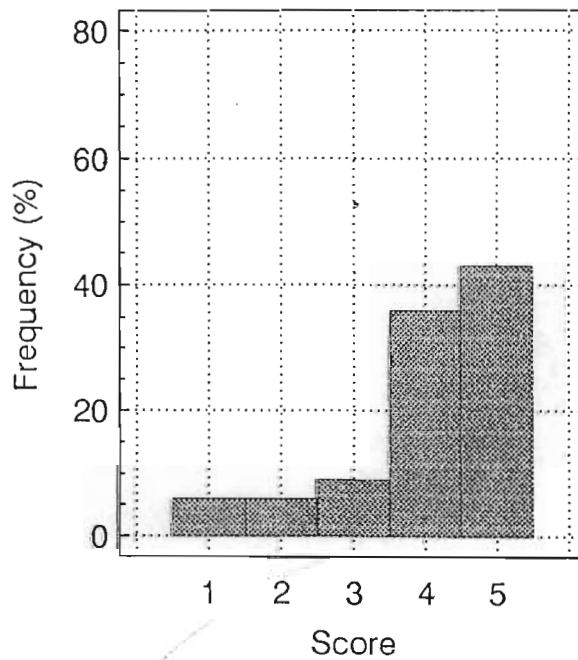


1=very important, 2=unimp., neither, 4=imp., 5=very imp.

Tricks

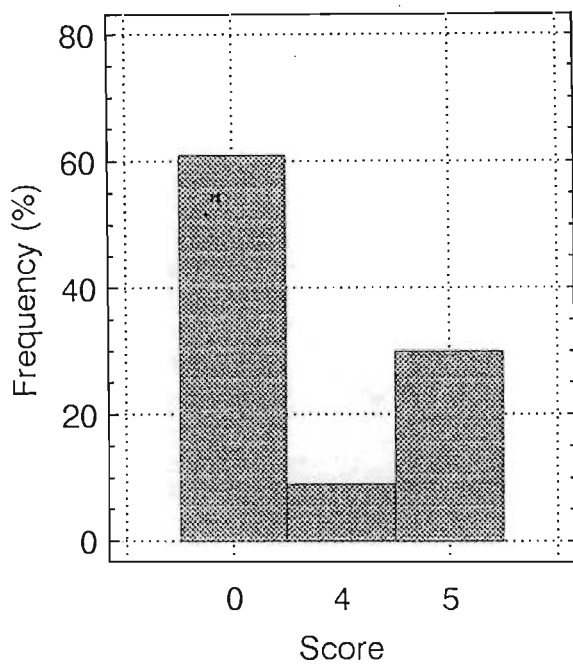


Colour

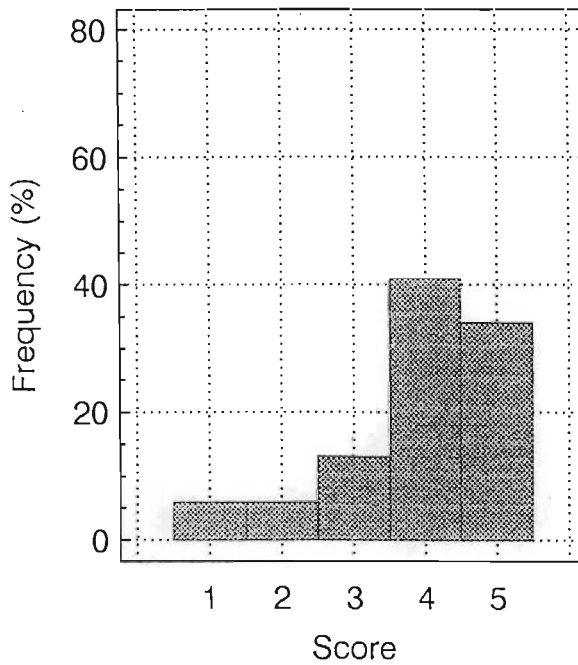


APPENDIX 22 -cntd.

Other Ethnicity

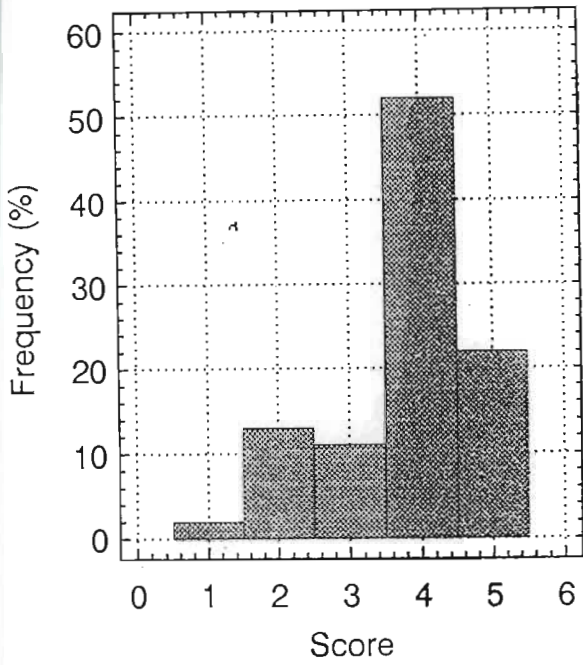


Ideology

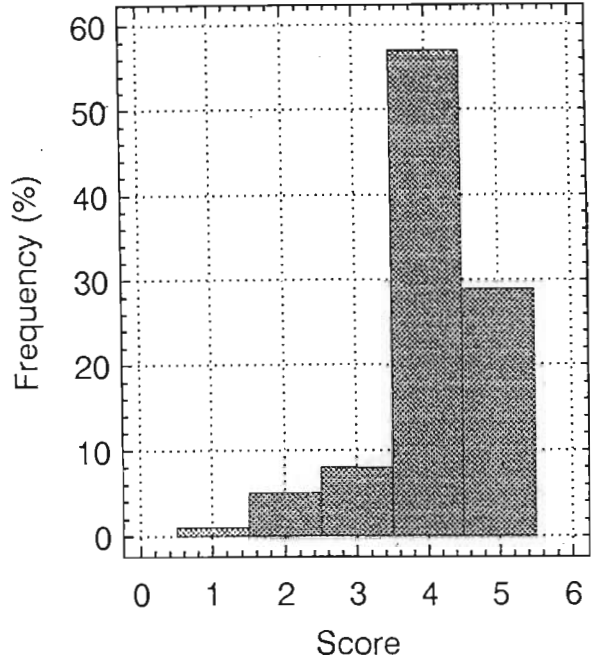


1=very important, 2=unimp., 3=neither, 4=imp., 5=very imp.

Self in relation to Organisational Roles

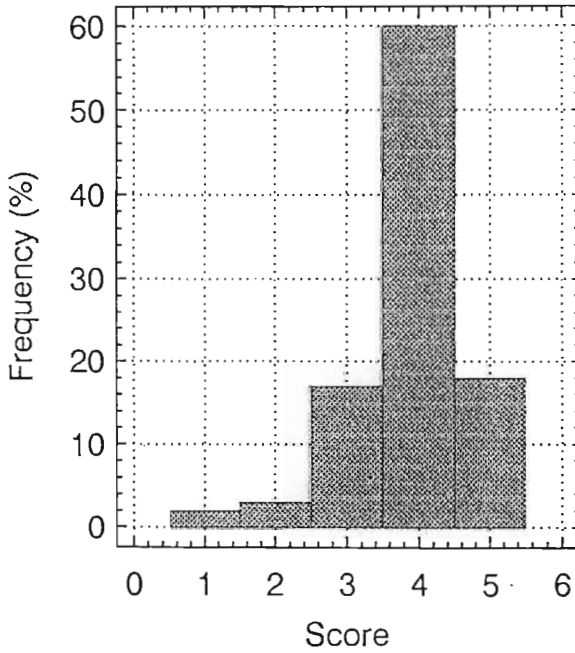


Access to Important People

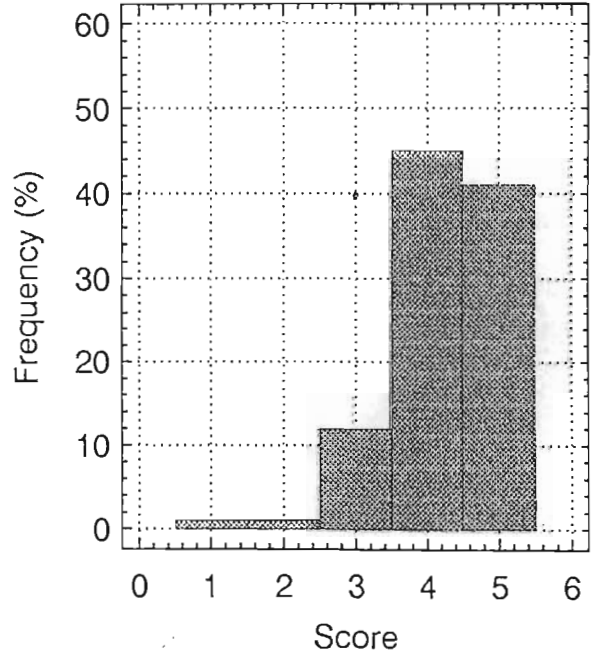


1=strongly disagree, 2=disag, 3=neither, 4=agree, 5=str agr

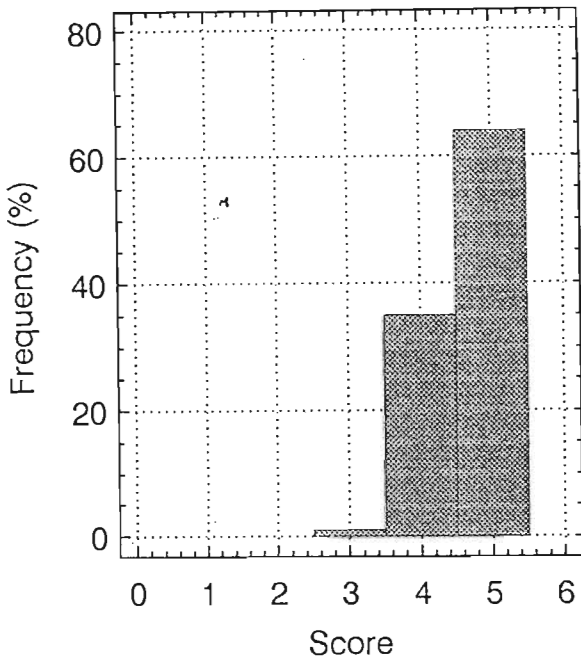
Department Influence



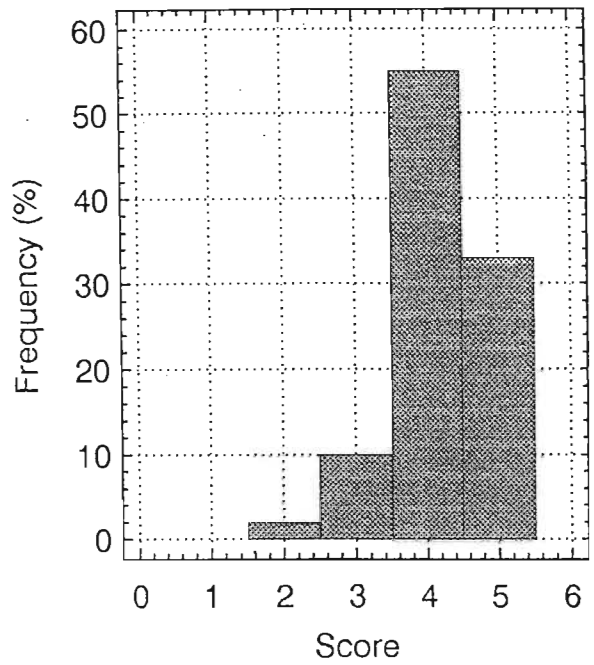
Position in Dept. is Responsible



Awareness of Important People

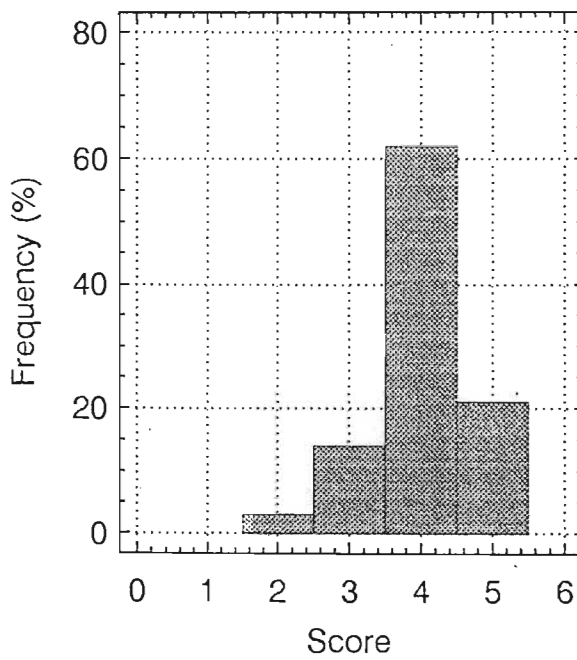


Consultation

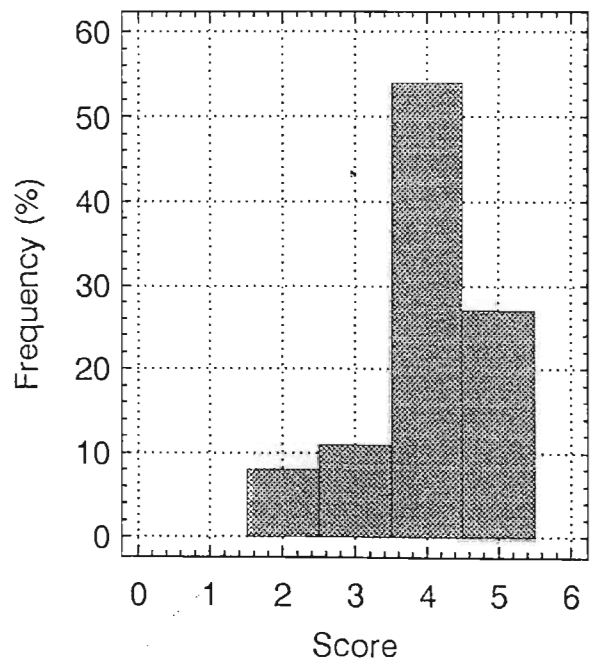


1=strongly disagree, 2=disag, 3=neither, 4=agree, 5=str agr

Co-decision

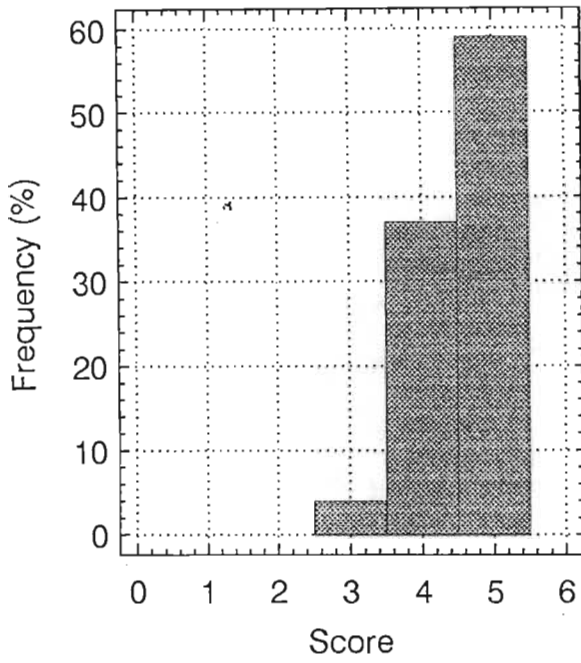


Decisions

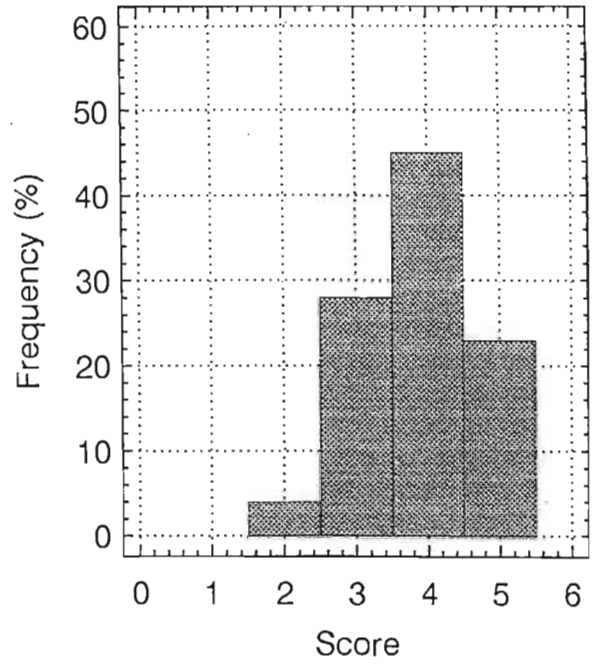


APPENDIX 23- cntd.

Suggestions



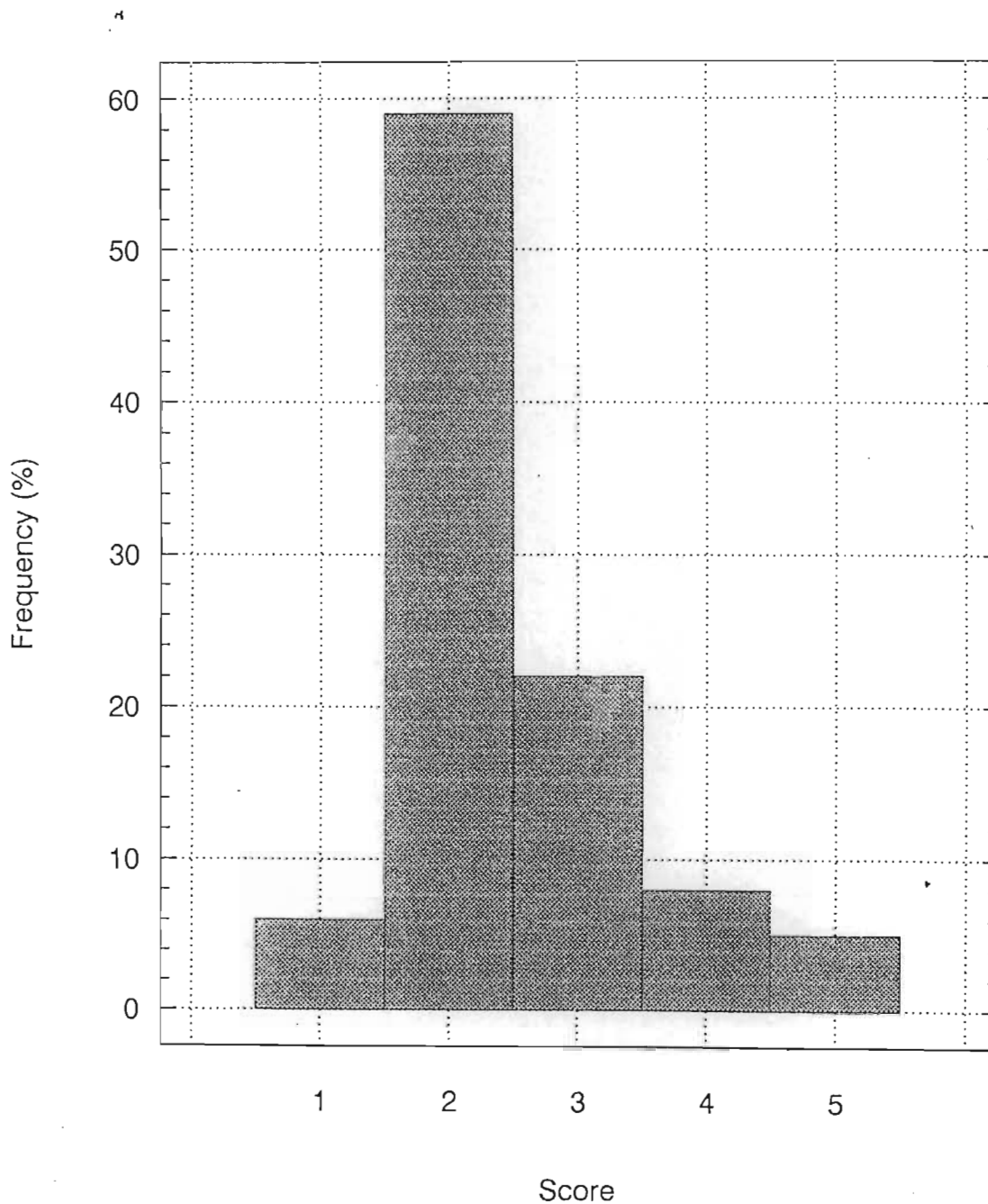
Change Life



1=strongly disagree, 2=disag, 3=neither, 4=agree, 5=str agr

# APPENDIX 24

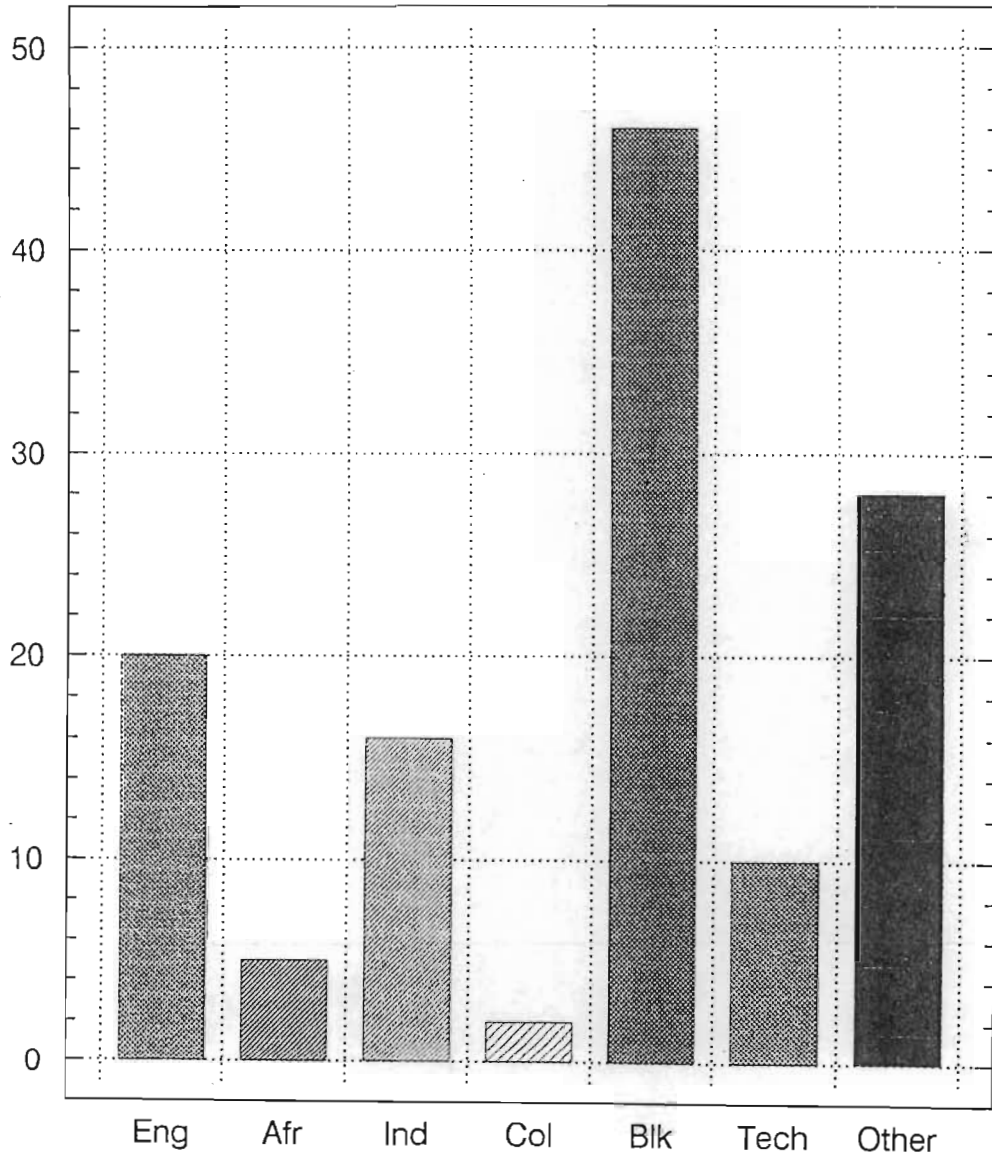
## Empowerment



1=very happy, 2=happy, 3=neutral, 4=unhappy, 5=very unhappy

# APPENDIX 25

## Institutions from Which One Graduated



**APPENDIX 26**

**Strictly confidential**

**DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL AND LABOUR STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF NATAL**

**DURBAN**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF BLACKS IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMMES**

**THANDEKILE SYLVIA MAGOJO**

**MARCH 1994**

## **Introduction**

Affirmative action programmes in South Africa have come under increasing criticism for being racist, elitist and for having poor results. At the same time they are viewed as necessary in some form or another by most parties. This research examines the ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness and thus the sustainability of affirmative action programmes. Please feel free to answer the questions asked. Your responses are very valuable and will be treated confidentially.

## **General instructions**

Either a pen or pencil may be used to complete this questionnaire. There are three types of questions: single response; multiple response; and written response questions. Most of the questions require a single response and may be answered by simply placing a circle around the relevant number. Multiple response questions are indicated by the words "choose as many as are relevant". Where written responses are required space is provided, however, you may write in additional comments whenever you wish to do so. Please ignore the boxes beside the questions and answers; these are for office tabulation only.

PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE CHOICE UNLESS ASKED FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE

Q1. **Within which category does your age fall?** [ ]

1. 20 - 25
2. 26 - 30
3. 31 - 35
4. 36 - 40
5. 41 - 45
6. 46 - 50
7. 51 +

Q2. **How long have you worked in the private sector? (Time in years)** [ ]

1. 0 - 5
2. 6 - 10
3. 11 +

Q3. **How long have you worked in this company? (Time in years)** [ ]

1. 0 - 5
2. 6 - 10
3. 11 +

Q4. **Within which category does your monthly gross salary fall?** [ ]

1. R3 000 - R5 000
2. R5 001 - R7 000
3. R7 001 - R9 000
4. R9 001 +

Q5. **a. Are there any other packages attached to your position (like a prestigious office, a company car, etc.)?** [ ]

1. Yes
2. No

b. If yes:

Please circle those that apply to your situation from the list below. Choose as many as are relevant.

- |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Company Car                       | [ ] |
| 2. Office with prestigious furniture | [ ] |
| 3. Access to staff canteen           | [ ] |
| 4. Company house                     | [ ] |
| 5. Housing subsidy                   | [ ] |
| 6. Bonus                             | [ ] |
| 7. Longer leave                      | [ ] |
| 8. Paternity/maternity leave         | [ ] |
| 9. Other (specify)                   | [ ] |

If other, please specify:

-----

Q6. What is your highest educational qualification? [ ]

1. Matric
2. Diploma
3. Degree
4. Honours
5. Masters
6. Doctorate

**Q7. Within which category do you think your first job in the private sector fell?** [ ]

1. Executive level
2. Senior management level
3. Middle management level
4. Lower management level
5. Professional level
6. Technical level
7. Other

If other, please specify

-----

**Q8. Within which category does your present job fall?** [ ]

1. Executive level
2. Senior management level
3. Middle management level
4. Lower management level
5. Professional level

**Q9. Coming to your department, what is its function within the organisation?** [ ]

1. Staff development
2. Service department
3. Production department
4. Marketing and sales department
5. Finance department
6. Other

Q10. The following are institutions (in categories) from which men and women may graduate during their educational career. Please tick the University category(ies) from which you graduated. Choose as many as are relevant.

1. University of Natal, Rhodes, UCT, Wits [ ]
2. RAU, Pretoria, Stellenbosch, OFS, Potch [ ]
3. University of Durban Westville [ ]
4. University of Western Cape [ ]
5. UniZulu, Bop, Fort Hare, UniNorth, UNITRA [ ]
6. Technikon [ ]
7. Other [ ]

If other, please specify

-----

Q11. What is your gender? [ ]

1. Male
2. Female

Q12. The following are factors which are used by many people like yourself to explain why they were hired. Please consider these factors and use the scale provided to rank the importance of each of these in determining why you were hired in this corporation. Scale: 1 = Very unimportant, 2 = Unimportant, 3 = Neither important or unimportant, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important, 6 = Not applicable. Write the appropriate number next to each factor.

1. Because I am black [ ]
  2. Because I am a woman [ ]
  3. Because I am a black woman [ ]
  4. Because I am a man [ ]
  5. Because I am a black man [ ]
  6. On merit [ ]
  7. Other, please specify [ ]
-

Q13. **In your corporation, how many people hold managerial positions?** [ ]

Number of people holding managerial positions =

Q14. **How many of total managers are black (African)?** [ ]

Number of black managers =

Q15. **How many total managers are women?** [ ]

Number of women managers =

Q16. **How many of total managers are black women?** [ ]

Number of black women managers =

Q17 a. **Are there any informal corporate clubs in your corporation (like playing cards, golfing)?** [ ]

1. Yes
2. No

b. **If yes:**

i. **How many are there?** [ ]

1. 1 - 2
2. 3 - 4
3. 5 +

ii. What type of clubs are these? Choose as many as are relevant.

- |                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| 1. Playing cards | [ ] |
| 2. Fishing       | [ ] |
| 3. Golfing       | [ ] |
| 4. Other         | [ ] |

If other, please specify:

-----

iii. Are you a member of any of these clubs? [ ]

1. Yes
2. No

c. If no:

i. Give two reasons why you are not a member.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

ii. Do you think there is anything you can do to become a member?

[ ]

1. Yes
2. No

d. If yes:

i. Is your spouse[/partner] accepted or not?

[ ]

1. Not accepted
2. Not sure
3. Accepted

ii. What did you do to become a member?

[ ]

-----  
[ ]  
-----

Q18 a. In your job, is there any formal (written down) job description?

[ ]

1. Yes
2. No

b. If yes:

Who developed it? Choose as many as are relevant.

[ ]

1. Myself
2. My immediate superior
3. My predecessor
4. Don't know
5. Other

[ ]

[ ]

If other, please specify:

-----

c. Do you think your job responsibilities measure up to your job description?

[ ]

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

d. If no, give two reasons why you think this is so.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

- Q19 a. Do you think you are adequately trained for your present job or not? [ ]
1. Not adequately trained
  2. Don't know
  3. Adequately trained

b. If not adequately trained:

- i. In which areas do you think you are inadequately trained? [ ]
- [ ]
- 

- ii. What can you do to acquire such skills? [ ]
- [ ]
- 

- Q20 a. In your present job do you think you are known by people who make important decisions within your organisation or not? [ ]
1. Known (in terms of physical location and tangible success at work).
  2. Don't know
  3. Not known

b. If not known:

- i. What do you think are the factors contributing to this? [ ]
- [ ]
- [ ]
-

ii. What things do you think you can do to make yourself known?

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

c. If known:

How did you get to be known (two reasons)?

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q21 a. In terms of promotion, do you think you have moved faster or slower than or the same as your white colleagues?

[ ]

1. Faster
2. Same
3. Slower
4. Difficult to assess

b. Give two reasons for your assessment.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

PLEASE NOTE: Male respondents only must respond to Q22 to Q25. Women respondents please ignore Q22 to Q25 and continue from Q26.

Q22 a. Male respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your white male colleagues?

[ ]

1. Faster
2. Same
3. Slower
4. Difficult to assess

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q23 a. Male respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower, or the same as your white female colleagues?

[ ]

1. Faster
2. Same
3. Slower
4. Difficult to assess
5. N/A

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q24 a. Male respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your black female colleagues?

[ ]

- 1. Faster
- 2. Same
- 3. Slower
- 4. Difficult to assess
- 5. N/A

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q25 a. Male respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your black male colleagues?

[ ]

- 1. Faster
- 2. Same
- 3. Slower
- 4. Difficult to assess
- 5. N/A

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

PLEASE NOTE: Women respondents only must respond to Q26 to Q29. Male respondents please ignore Q26 to Q29 and continue from Q30.

Q26 a. Women respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your black male colleagues?

[ ]

1. Faster
2. Same
3. Slower
4. Difficult to assess
5. N/A

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q27 a. Women respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower, or the same as your white female colleagues?

[ ]

1. Faster
2. Same
3. Slower
4. Difficult to assess
5. N/A

b. Give two reasons for your response.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q28 a. **Women respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your white male colleagues?**

[ ]

- 1. Faster
- 2. Same
- 3. Slower
- 4. Difficult to assess
- 5. N/A

b. **Give two reasons for your response.**

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q29 a. **Women respondents only. Do you think you have moved faster or slower or the same as your black female colleagues?**

[ ]

- 1. Faster
- 2. Same
- 3. Slower
- 4. Difficult to assess
- 5. N/A

b. **Give two reasons for your response.**

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q30. In your company what factors do you think are the most important ones that contribute to ones promotion? (Give only three reasons rated in order of importance).

Most important:

[ ]

-----  
Second important:

[ ]

-----  
Third important:

[ ]

Q31. Carefully consider the following factors and use the scale given to assess the importance of each for job success. Scale: 1 = Very unimportant, 2 = Unimportant, 3 = Neither important nor unimportant, 4 = Important, 5 = Very important. Write your choice of number next to the factor.

1. Individual effort [ ]

2. Education [ ]

3. Experience [ ]

4. Connections [ ]

5. Heritage [ ]

6. Luck [ ]

7. Tricks [ ]

8. Race [ ]

9. Ideology (the way of thinking) [ ]

10. Other [ ]

If other, please specify:

-----

Q32 a. Again thinking about your experience in commerce and/or industry, did you expect promotion to give you some or full or no decision-making powers? [ ]

- 1. Full decision-making powers
- 2. Some decision-making powers
- 3. Don't know
- 4. No decision-making powers

b. Give two reasons for your answer. [ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q33 a. What type of relationship would you say you have with your immediate superior? [ ]

- 1. Positive (friendly, co-operative, accepting, honest)
- 2. Lukewarm
- 3. Difficult to assess
- 4. No relationship
- 5. Negative (unfriendly, uncooperative, tense)

b. Give two reasons for your choice. [ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q34 a. What type of relationship would you say you have with your colleagues (other managers in your company)? [ ]

- 1. Positive (friendly, co-operative, accepting, honest)
- 2. Lukewarm
- 3. Difficult to assess
- 4. No relationship
- 5. Negative (unfriendly, uncooperative, tense)

b. Give two reasons for your choice.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q35

a. Are there any company projects (like research or developing training programmes, etc.) you have been involved in and initiated?

[ ]

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

b. If yes:

i. What type? (Give examples).

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

ii. How many?

[ ]

- 1. One
- 2. Two
- 3. Three or more

c. If no:

Why not? Give two reasons.

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q36 a. Now think about your colleagues within the managerial hierarchy. Is the one you interact the most with informally in your department or not? [ ]

1. Yes
2. No
3. N/A

b. If no:

i. What is the function of his/her department? [ ]

1. Staff support (public relations, personnel)
2. Service (head office)
3. Production
4. Marketing
5. Finance
6. Other

If other, please specify:

-----

c. What is the gender of this person? [ ]

1. Male
2. Female

d. What is his/her status level within the organisational hierarchy? [ ]

1. Executive
2. Senior management
3. Middle management
4. Lower management
5. Other

If other, please specify:

-----

e. To which group does he/she belong? [ ]

1. Black
2. White
3. Coloured
4. Indian
5. Other

If other, please specify.

[ ]

---

f. Do you think this person is visible enough (in terms of expertise and influence) in the organisation or not?

[ ]

1. Visible enough
2. Don't know
3. Not visible enough

Q37. Coming to your career ladder:

a. Would you say it is higher or lower or the same as that of your white colleagues?

[ ]

1. Higher
2. Same
3. Lower
4. Don't know

b. Would you say your career ladder is higher or lower than or the same as your male/female (the opposite gender) colleague?

[ ]

1. Higher
2. Same
3. Lower
4. Don't know
5. N/A

Q38 a. When you were still a novice at work in commerce and/or industry, did you have an experienced person who gave you guidance and support; who, in addition to being your role model, was your tutor or coach and your confidante (mentor/protege relationship)?

[ ]

1. Yes
2. No

**b. If yes:**

i. To which racial group did he/she belong? [ ]

- 1. White
- 2. Black
- 3. Indian
- 4. Coloured

ii. What gender was he/she? [ ]

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

iii. Did you find this relationship meaningful in terms of helping you in adapting to the work expectations?

[ ]

- 1. Meaningful
- 2. Don't know
- 3. Not meaningful

**c. If no:**

What do you think were the contributing factors to this? Give three reasons:

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

[ ]

-----

Q39. In your opinion which department do you think is more capable of making important contributions (like control over resources) critical to the organisation's survival (choose one only).

[ ]

- 1. Staff departments
- 2. Service departments
- 3. Production departments
- 4. Marketing departments
- 5. Finance
- 6. Don't know
- 7. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Q40. Listed below are the impressions people like yourself may have about themselves in relation to their employing organisations. Please use the scale to indicate whether you: 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; or 5 = Strongly agree with *each of these* impressions. Write your chosen number next to each impression.

- a. I have control over valued resources like information. [ ]
- b. I have access to important people in my organisation [ ]
- c. Relatively speaking, my department is influential and powerful [ ]
- d. My position within the department is meaningful in terms of responsibility and accountability. [ ]
- e. I know who the important people are in my organisation [ ]
- f. I have the right to consultation [ ]
- g. I have the right to co-decision [ ]
- h. I have the right to make decisions [ ]
- i. I have the right to make suggestions [ ]
- j. I can change things that affect my life at work [ ]

Q41. Here is a picture of how managers can feel about their participation in and control over issues within their organisation. (Read out the faces.)

1. The face at the top is of managers who are very happy at work.



2. The next face is of managers who are just happy but not very happy at work.



3. The next face is of managers who are not happy but also not unhappy - they are in the middle.



4. The next face is of managers who are unhappy with life at work.



5. The last face is of managers who are very angry and impatient with life at work.



Which face, in your organisation, shows the way most people like yourself feel about their organisation now? (Choose one only.)

[ ]

1. Very happy
2. Happy
3. Neutral
4. Unhappy
5. Very unhappy
6. Refuse to respond

Thank you for your contribution to this research.