

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS
INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE OVER A PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY TEN
YEARS AMONGST POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN A BUSINESS SCHOOL IN
KWAZULU-NATAL**

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Contents

1. Abstract	5
2. Introduction	7
3. Theoretical Framework	8
4. Rationale	35
5. Method	
5.1 Introduction	36
5.2 Participants	37
5.3 Demographics	38
6. Materials	
6.1 Interview Schedule	39
6.2 Recording Equipment	39
6.3 Procedure	39
6.4 Data analysis	41
7. Presentation and Discussion of Key Findings	44
8. Limitations of the Present Study	71

9. Conclusion and Recommendations	72
10. List of References	75
11. Appendix A	79

1. Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the internal and external factors influencing career choice and development over a period of approximately ten years and subsequently the variation in, or development of, these factors over this time. In addition, further investigations aimed to understand the extent to which broader economic and global shifts have influenced career trajectory or the *experience* of careers.

The participants in this research were five males, aged between twenty-eight and forty-one, currently completing their Master of Business Administration (MBA). The participants, from different race groups, were interviewed twice using semi-structured interviews and their information recorded and analysed. The analysis, making use of inductive thematic analysis, realised approximately 17 themes that aided in the following findings being confirmed:

Firstly, both internal and external factors influenced initial career choice with external factors being somewhat predominant. Secondly, findings suggested a strong relationship between these two sets of factors, with initial internal factors increasing considerably with time, becoming strongly dependant on an entirely new, different set of external factors.

Thirdly, findings suggested that career direction and trajectory has become more dynamic and diversified as a result of immense changes in the actual job, resulting in

individuals recognising the need to acquire more specialised skills and knowledge to adapt to the current job.

In terms of the acquisition of skills, findings suggest that there is no need to change/ move jobs; instead it is more important to acquire skills necessary to grow and develop within their current job and company. Results conclude that employees would only be inclined to move/ change jobs only if there was no room for growth and development.

Finally, considerable emphasis is being placed on the *self*, i.e.: self-management of one's career, one's quality of life and emphasis on personal development (such as the enrolment for an MBA).

2. Introduction

In the field of organisational psychology, this research will explore the factors that influence career development over a period spanning approximately ten years. This research will investigate the factors that initially influenced career choice when individuals initially embarked on a career (i.e.: having completed school). Further investigation will be directed towards the factors that influence individuals in contemporary times (i.e.: about ten years later; having completed a degree, entered the world of work and had some work experience). A distinction will also be made between internal factors (personal, intra-psychic) and external factors (parents, socio-economic) and the relevance of these factors at different periods in people's lives. In addition, this research will also focus on examining the extent to which globalisation has influenced/ not influenced individuals experiences of their careers.

Numerous theorists (Donald Super, John Holland) have theorised about the concept of careers and career development and this research will consider their work as possible theoretical standpoints. The work of Driver (1996) and the Career Concept model will be significant in this research. Primarily, this research will direct its interests towards the factors informing career choice and development over an extended period of time; carefully examining any changes in the factors influencing careers and any underlying motives for this change. This interest will be transformed into a methodological process by investigating individuals internal and/ or external factors and subsequent investigation into how these factors have played out over time.

In addition, the era of post-industrialism and globalisation may have played a significant role in altering the nature of the workplace and design of organisations. This research will unpack the extent to which the changing nature of the workplace has impacted on individuals experience of careers and assess developments in career trajectory that are a direct/ indirect result of the emergence of the post-industrial global society.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The field of organisational psychology has been altered greatly by the advent of broader environmental and organisational changes, consequently altering the basic definition of the term 'career'. This review will outline the literature on careers, career theory and career development. Career theories provide an extensive body of literature, which offers a vast amount of information on career choices, how is this choice made and most importantly, what factors motivate this choice at different periods of one's life (Schreuder and Theron, 1997).

After a discussion on Holland and Super's work, I will address the limitations of their theories. I will also address more recently developed theories/ approaches to understanding careers, i.e.: the 21st Century Career Planning Model and the Protean career. The work of Driver 1996 (Career Concept model) is intimately linked to the aims and objectives of this research. The value of their work highlights salient ideas worth discussing, but will not be presented as a theoretical base for this research.

Much of the above-mentioned literature embodies theory established on middle class European samples and consequently, these are not 'normed' for the South African context. To this extent, the review will address the limitations of adopting such approaches to South Africa and introduce the concept of exotic psychology. In addition, a developmental-contextual framework (Vondracek, 1992; Vondracek, Lerner and

Schulenburg, 1983, 1986; cited in Stead, 1996) will be discussed, as this approach is more appropriate for use and practice in South Africa.

To conclude, I will draw on other studies (Behr, 1972; Freeman, 1971) that have similar methodologies and aims to this research. I will also outline more recent career developmental research in general and in the context of South Africa, highlighting the concept of indigenous psychology. It is not intended that the review provide a theoretical foundation for this research, instead; the review will consider and outline various theoretical perspectives for the purpose of aiding and assisting the research process.

The literature offers many definitions of career. Career can be defined as “the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work related experiences and activities over the span of the person’s life” (Hall, 1976: 8). However, Driver and Davis (1987) raise two critical issues in their definition:

“Do career choices change over time or stay constant?

Are career choices externally generated or internal processes?” (Cooper and Robertson, 1996: 238)

These two issues capture the essence of this research and the Career Concept model (Driver, 1996) addresses these two questions adequately.

3.2 Traditional Theories on Career

Holland's theory suggests that "career choices represent an extension of personality and an attempt to implement broad personal behavioural styles in the context of one's life work" and ... "people project their views of themselves and the world of work onto occupational titles" (Osipow, 1973: 41). According to Holland (1973, 19850) "career choice is a function of the relation between personality type and occupational environment (Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 43). Essentially, the theory is based on four basic assumptions:

1. "In our culture, most persons can be categorised as one of the six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.
2. Often, individuals mainly inhabit an environment with the corresponding personality type (Weinrach, 1979). Usually, individuals will collect in a certain setting and create an environment in which a particular type will dominate, thus resulting in a congruency between the environment and type of people, e.g.: a farmer would learn the skill of farming cattle! (*ibid*)
3. People search for environments that will allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and take on agreeable problems and roles.

4. A person's behaviour is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment. This implies that once a person has identified their personality type it will be able to tell them how well they will fit or match their environment" (Holland, 1992; cited in Zunker, 1998: 53).

Holland asserts that individuals used their "modal personal orientation" to guide their choice of a career, but failed to specify how these modal personal orientations developed (Osipow, 1973: 42). Although Holland's theory asserts that all individuals belong to one of the six types, he fails to elucidate how people become the types they are (Weinrach, 1979). Holland's theory works on the assumption that individual career choice is based on one's personality but does not articulate how personalities develop or can be changed. However, there is sufficient evidence of a typology such as Holland's proving to be both reliable and valid. The theory is not criticism free, with some critics arguing that it fails to specify factors responsible for shaping and influencing the development of personal orientation and that Holland's model may be too simplistic and static (*ibid*). However, Holland argued that the following are instrumental in assisting individuals in selecting an occupational environment:

- ❖ Family and personal aspirations,
- ❖ Occupational history,
- ❖ Financial resources,
- ❖ General economic conditions in society and
- ❖ Educational opportunities (Osipow, 1973: 44/ 45)

Furthermore, Holland's failure to account for specific factors responsible for shaping one's personal orientation during the adolescent or adult years is significant, considering the focus of this research (Osipow, 1973). An individual uses his/ her personal orientation to choose a career, but some discussion on the factors contributing to the development of personal orientation is critical. Holland's theory has enjoyed wide empirical support, showing strong correlations between personal orientations to familial patterns such as parental behaviours, ambitions and goals for their offspring. This conclusion has also been criticised for its failure to include females (*ibid*).

Holland himself acknowledged the criticisms of his theory and confirmed that his theory holds little applicability to women and that his original assumptions around the concept of the personal orientation are "too ambiguous to be adequately tested" (Osipow, 1973: 62). Authors (Wheeler, 1992; Watson, Stead and Schonegeval, 1998) have argued that Holland's theory is inappropriate for use in South Africa, with recent research indicating that his interest structure is a poor gauge and measure when applied to Black South African adolescents (Watson and Stead, 2002).

Donald Super, who many would consider a pioneer in career theory, argues "a man selects or rejects an occupation because of his belief that the field is or is not consistent with his view of himself" (Osipow, 1973: 131).

Although this assumption is made by Super and appears similar to the work of Holland, it refers instead to the work of Bordin (1943; cited in Osipow, 1973) whose work had a profound effect on Super. Super's work is valuable because he adopts a

developmental approach to careers, arguing “a person strives to implement his self-concept by choosing an occupation that he sees as most likely to permit him self-expression” (Osipow, 1973: 132). Super (1992) proposed that the behaviours that individuals engage in are related to their occupation in a way that exemplifies their specific life stage and outlined the following sub-stages in career development.

- ❖ Growth (ages 0 - 12/ 14)
- ❖ Exploration (14 - 25)
- ❖ Establishment (25 -
- ❖ Maintenance (45 - 65)
- ❖ Decline (65+) (Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 67/ 68).

The focus of this research is chiefly concerned with the exploration and establishment stages, since this research will investigate the salient factors influencing individuals making a career choice at these stages in their lives. In addition, Super also identified the following sub-stages:

- ❖ Crystallisation (ages 14 - 18)
- ❖ Specification (18 - 21)
- ❖ Implementation (21 - 24)
- ❖ Stabilisation (25 - 35)
- ❖ Consolidation (35+) (Osipow, 1973: 138/ 139)

Super did identify specific behaviours and attitudes that characterised individuals in the above-mentioned stages. It isn't necessary to elaborate or explain the specific behaviours at each stage, rather, to acknowledge that the crystallisation stage and its subsequent behaviours coincide with the age of an individual attending and concluding high school. Consequently, at this stage, there would be subsequent factors that would influence career trajectory and/ or respective career choice, but Super's failure to outline such factors, much like Holland, leaves the researcher with little to cross-reference or compare to the findings of this research (Osipow, 1973). This shortcoming prevents the use of this particular aspect of Super's theory for my analysis.

The context of this research (i.e.: South African) is significant and one must take *cognisance* of contextual and environmental factors that could affect career choice. Osipow (1973: 168) argued, "Super still must devise a way to include economic and social factors which may influence career decisions in a more direct way than described in his theory". In South Africa, the present educational system allows for pupils in secondary schools to have some form of career guidance (a small percentage of schools have guidance or career counsellors) to assist them in their career choices. Furthermore, South Africa's tumultuous political history has shaped the economical and social transitions during the past decade, having an affect on factors influencing career choices.

Even though most of the empirical findings concerned with testing Super's theory have been confirmatory, some authors (Watson and Stead, 2002) argue that Super's theory is not applicable in South Africa. Watson and Stead (2002) argue for a

more development-contextual approach for South Africa and outline two criticisms of Super's theory, with the first being that South African career researchers and practitioners have insufficiently utilised Super's model (Super et al., 1996; cited in Watson and Stead, 2002). Secondly, de Bruin and Nel (1996) concluded that the applicability of Super's theory has been even more distorted by an overwhelming amount of research being carried on samples containing white middle class individuals (*ibid*).

That concludes the discussion of John Holland and Donald Super's work. I will now focus on more newly developed approaches to careers.

3.3 Newer Approaches to Understanding Careers

21st Century Career Planning Model

The model (proposed by Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995) adopts a contemporary approach to careers and career development, incorporating broader changes in the environment and emphasising experience, skill and flexibility over predefined career paths as previously envisaged (Hall and Mirvis, 1995; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001). This model posits a new world where the traditional way of thinking about career is fast becoming obsolete, i.e.: a world where individuals are inspired and encouraged to take charge of the development of their careers. The model advocates a situation where "success is seen as embracing not only traditional terms of economic gain, but also for individual spiritual and emotional development" (Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 147/ 8).

Although this model does not stipulate specific steps and developmental stages that would correspond with the aims of this research, it provides a coherent approach to understanding the changes that are occurring in careers, choosing a career and career development in contemporary times. The model assumes that individuals go on a journey of personal development and this journey is facilitated by interaction with those factors relevant to planning a career in the 21st century (Schreuder and Theron, 2001).

The model is developmental in nature and advocates personal development at its core (see Annexure A) with other supporting steps (listed below) that should be followed to ensure a valuable quest for personal development.

- ❖ Honour resistance,
- ❖ Clarify ideal future,
- ❖ Study self,
- ❖ Draft tentative plan,
- ❖ Analyse past competencies,
- ❖ Analyse competencies needed in ideal future,
- ❖ Explore plan with others,
- ❖ Execute plan incrementally and reflect on learning's and
- ❖ Evaluate and reformulate plans (Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 148).

An elaborate synopsis of each step is not necessary, but the relevance lies in the fact that the model argues that “the only constant is change” (DuBrin, 2000: 226) and the future

of career emphasises flexibility, adaptability, innovation, new ways of thinking and greater awareness of the self (Schreuder and Theron, 2001). The strength of this model is that it makes provisions for newer developments and almost advocates a preparation for the unprepared future.

The Protean Career

Similar to the 21st Century Career Planning model, the Protean career (Protean- derived from the Greek mythology, with Proteus denoting positive connotations of flexibility, versatility and adaptability; cited in [http1](http://1)) is a concept relatively new to career development theory and was developed in reaction to significant broader environmental and organisational changes. Although Rifkin (2000) introduces the notion of a ‘workerless world’, he is not the first to comment on the dramatic shifts in work and experience of ‘career’ in the advent of significant changes in the world and experience of work. Essentially, a Protean career can be thought of as a tool or mechanism that helps people understand the new way in which career and career development should be understood in the 21st century, amidst pertinent global changes. Hall and Mirvis define Protean career as:

“A process, which the person, not organisation, is managing. It consists of all the persons varied experiences in education, training, work in several organisations, changes in occupational field and so forth. The Protean career is shaped more by the individual than by the organisation and may be redirected from time to time to meet the needs (i.e.: the individual)” (Schreuder and Theron, 1997: 14).

According to this notion, career now assumes a considerably newer definition than its predecessors, because the onus now falls on the individual, rather than the organisation, to manage and develop his/ her own career. In addition, this form of career has the individual decide on his/ her own benchmark of success and performance, namely psychological success, as opposed to the traditional measure of success being decided upon by the organisation, those being salary and position (Hall, 1976; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 1997). According to Hall (1996b) the characteristics of a Protean career are:

- ❖ Psychological success,
- ❖ Being self-managed,
- ❖ A series of identity changes,
- ❖ Chronological age being unimportant,
- ❖ Personal responsibility,
- ❖ Internal career thinking being emphasised (Schreuder and Theron, 2001).

The Protean career cannot be interpreted as a theory (empirically tried and tested); instead it offers a non-traditional way to appreciate the 21st century career. This concept offers a new way of understanding careers. The Protean career isn't a body of theoretical knowledge, but does allow for a refreshing and interesting way to view careers in contemporary times, similar to the 21st Century Career Planning model.

The new literature on careers and career development argues that the future is indeed uncertain and asserts that individuals can only manage this change by adopting a

different perspective. The Protean career tends to favour the values of individual freedom, growth and further characterised by high degrees of mobility (Hall, 1976; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 1997). In addition, London and Stumpf contend:

“During the next twenty years, career development opportunities will be affected by technological, organisational and individual changes... confronted with change and uncertainty, individuals will need to be adaptive, able to handle ambiguity and resilient in the face of career barriers” (Hall and Associates, 1986: 21).

In summation, the literature posits that individuals will be called upon to think about their careers and its development in ways different from previously envisaged and planned. Gelatt (1989: 252) advocates a notion of “positive uncertainty” which purports the idea that “changing one’s mind will be an essential skill in the future”.

However, even though Gelatt’s ideas are aimed specifically at counsellors helping their clients in the future, I am of the belief that his approach has wide appeal, especially in the field of career choice. Similarly, London and Stumpf argue that a world of uncertainty is upon us, a world wherein which uncertainty, ambiguity, innovation and resilience are the order of the day, regarding career management (Hall and Associates, 1986). To theorise the new mode of the 21st century career and link it to the aims of this research, I will present the work of Driver (1996) who outlines the Career Concept model.

Career Concept Model

The Career Concept model bears great relevance to the aims of this research. The model specifically addresses the flow and trajectory of careers over a period of time in the advent of larger broader environmental and organisational changes (Cooper and Robertson, 1996). The model identifies four basic concepts used to define careers:

- ❖ Steady-State: career choice is made once, for a lifetime commitment to an occupation,
- ❖ Linear: career activity continues throughout life as one moves up an occupational ladder,
- ❖ Spiral: career choice evolves through a series of occupations (7 - 10 year durations) where each new choice builds on the past and develops new skills,
- ❖ Transitory: career choice is almost continuous- fields, organisations, etc. Jobs change over 1 - 4 year intervals with variety the dominant force (Cooper and Robertson, 1996: 239).

Similarly, Super's developmental theory, largely influenced by the work of Miller and Form (1951) and Davidson and Anderson (1937), purports a developmental progression in careers and embraces the concept of career patterns. Super et al. (1957) outlined specific patterns (listed below) are indicative of many "psychological, physical, situational and societal factors" that affect an individual's life (Osipow, 1973: 133).

- ❖ Stable- a career is entered into very early on in one's life and remains permanent, e.g.: medicine,
- ❖ Conventional- several jobs are initially tried and one leads to a stable job,
- ❖ Unstable- series of trial jobs which lends itself to temporary stability which is soon disrupted and finally,
- ❖ Multiple trial- individuals move from one stable entry-level job to another (*ibid*).

It is interesting to note the similarities between the two sets above, but the key difference is that Super's ideas was hypothesised almost four decades ago, when factors such as extensive economic and global change, heightened global competition and rapid pace of technology affecting all spheres of human interaction (courtesy of globalisation) were hardly as pervasive and influential as they are today. Nevertheless, the Career Concept model is relevant to the aims of this research.

Several authors (Littleton, Arthur and Rousseau, 1979; cited in Collin and Young, 2000; Driver, 1996) support the notion that career and career progression is moving rapidly away from the traditional concept of the career as being linear, towards a more progressive form. Littleton et al. (1979) argue that this new form of career has "multiple relationships in boundary less careers" and Riverin-Simard label it "structured instability" (Collin and Young, 2000: 101). In addition, London and Stumpf also argue that career progression is far away from the linear or predictable pattern that it previously espoused (Hall and Associates, 1986).

Storey states that a recent plethora of books (Herrito and Pumbereton, 1995; Hall and Associates, 1996; Arnold, 1997) have been solely concerned with theorising this *new* interpretation of career (Collin and Young, 2000). Still, Driver (1996) outlines this transition and progression in career development in a simple yet valuable manner. Driver (1996) argues that the research done by Driver and Coombs (1983) on the model is “sparse but confirmatory” (Cooper and Robertson, 1996: 241). The relationship between age and career concept yielded very interesting correlations:

- ❖ Transitory stage was more prevalent amongst younger workers,
- ❖ Steady-state and linear most frequent among middle aged workers and
- ❖ Spiral dominant among older workers (*ibid*).

According to the research on Driver’s model, a basic trend shows rapid movement of youth away from steady state and linear to more transitory and spiral (Driver, 1996). Several authors (Badaway, 1981; Prince, 1984; Steiner and Farr, 1986; McKinnon, 1987; Rynes, 1987) have adopted this model and confirmed its conclusions (Cooper and Robertson, 1996: 241). However, the research on career concepts appears to be largely vague, regarding engineers in particular. Burke (1985) argued that the linear orientation is not as prevalent as Driver posits and Latack and D’Amico (1985) found that the sample of young people only contained 4% in transitory careers and an overwhelming 70% in the linear (*ibid*).

Further research (Guest and Mackenzie Davey, 1996) suggests that although organisations have moved from a rather traditional phase to a more transitional one,

they have still reverted back to the traditional form, especially among the key managers; where the traditional career is still very much intact (Collin and Young, 2000). In addition, Arnold (1997, p. xiii) asserts that the newer forms of career exhibit a pattern swaying away from “a steady, upward progression with a single employer towards a broader definition that embraces any sequence of employment-related positions” (Collin and Young, 2000: 33).

The literature demonstrates wide empirical support for Driver’s model but this research is more concerned with the manner in which Driver has presented his ideas i.e.: a definite transition from traditional steady state career progression to a more flexible, flux state of transitions.

Thus far much of the literature has examined changes in career and career patterns but little emphasis has been fallen on the change in the nature and perception of work. Muchinsky (2003) identifies that the nature of work and the perceptions of the workplace has changed on three different dimensions, i.e.: individual, work and societal. An in-depth elaboration of each dimension is not necessary, but a brief synthesis of the most relevant ideas is necessary.

Firstly, Muchinsky (2003: 443) argues, “the tumultuous amount of change in the working environment will certainly affect the type of individuals who will prosper in this environment and influence the attributes of individuals that organisations find desirable”. More specifically, organisations are seeking adaptable employees, i.e.: those

possessing a “willingness to embrace new situations, growing shift to work teams, skills relating to communication, inter-personal relationships and conflict resolution” (*ibid*).

Secondly, the work dimension concerns itself with the changes in how work is being performed, in relation to technology, the rise of a temporary workforce and lifelong learning. Muchinsky (2003: 447) states “new technologies are posited to change not only the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA’s) of individuals, but also the manner in which we think of KSA’s”. Furthermore, Cropanzano and Prehar (2001) concluded that only 100 temporary employment agencies and approximately 470,000 temporary employees existed in 1990, whereas this number within the space of a decade in the United States of America (Muchinsky, 2003). This is indicative of new trends in the market, where “employment of a temporary workforce was adopted as a business strategy for the same reasons as downsizing was in the past two decades” (Muchinsky, 2003: 447). This shift to temporary, part-time work is summarised in the following, which appeared on a bulletin board of a plant experiencing large-scale lay-offs:

“we can’t promise you how long we’ll be in business.

we can’t promise you that we won’t be bought by another big company.

we can’t promise that there’ll be room for promotion.

we can’t promise that your job will exist till retirement age.

we can’t promise that the money will be available for pension.

we can’t expect your underlying loyalty and we aren’t sure we want it (Hall and Mirvis, 1995: 326)” (cited in Muchinsky, 2003: 447).

Furthermore, Hall and Mirvis (1995: 326) concluded that “workers will have to change jobs, companies and even careers over their lifetimes...workers who cannot adapt to this kind of change will likely plateau in their work lives or simply be ushered out of their organisation” (Muchinsky, 2003: 449). Therefore, Muchinsky’s conclusions provide important points worth discussing in my analysis.

3.4 Developmental- Conceptual Framework

The developmental-conceptual framework (Vondracek, 1992; Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenburg, 1983, 1986; cited in Stead, 1996) focuses specifically on careers in South Africa and it has been widely documented (Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000; Naicker, 1994) as being a viable critique of Westernised Career Psychology.

This theory can be applied to understand careers and has practical applicability, and posits valuable points worth discussing. Firstly the model posits a relationship between the individual and immediate environment and “underscores the dynamic interaction between the individual and the individuals proximal (e.g.: family, peers) and distal (e.g.: socio-cultural, economic) context” (Stead, 1996: 270). Secondly, the model emphasises factors influencing life circumstance and careers external to the individual’s locus of control and further emphasises the individual-context/ environment dynamic, such as economic, cultural educational and socio-political factors (Stead, 1996).

Blustein and McWhirter (2000) acknowledge the need for a theory that is applicable to South African career development, stating, “existing career theories have

been developed by middle-class scholars for privileged populations and socio-economic backgrounds” (Watson and Stead, 2002: 27).

These theories are not sensitive to the needs of South Africans, but the developmental-contextual framework presents a mechanism that is specifically engineered for career development in South Africa and even though this framework focuses on the career development of Black South African adolescents, it is nevertheless a step in the right direction.

In addition, the model also provides guidelines for counsellors in South Africa regarding careers and career development and further outlines interventions (for individuals, the economy and organisations) that can be applied to South Africa, rendering the model highly useful. To elaborate on any of the following would surpass the aims of this research, but it is important to realise that there is a growing contingent of individuals committed to developing a type of psychology not only for South Africa, but the entire continent of Africa (i.e.: an African Psychology movement).

3.5 Comparative Studies

The relationship between parental influence and occupational/ career choice has been researched previously, but not as extensively as this research desires. The literature (Jahoda, 1952; Carter, 1962) suggests that parental influence was significant in influencing career choice and trajectory (Behr, 1972). Roe (1957) also concluded that parents are a crucial variable in the development of children’s personalities, ultimately

influencing the child's later vocational behaviour (Osipow, 1973). In addition, Werts (1969) concluded that parental information given was a significant factor in eventual career choice in a sample consisting of 76 000 males. However, Werts's research was normed on an exclusive male sample and population, allowing no ability to make inferences to females (Behr, 1972). In addition, Behr (1972) also found that those parents who were highly educated were found more to encourage their daughters to pursue tertiary education and that Indian parents favoured the occupations of medicine and teaching; since these occupations would bring high social status, prestige and security. However, there are limitations with this research because sample targeted exclusively first year Indian males (Behr, 1972).

In addition, Freeman's (1971) study concluded that:

1. "In most cases the final career plans are made during their college period and,
2. For many students, career plans are amenable to change during college in response to new information and conditions" (Freeman, 1971: 181/ 183).

Furthermore, his findings illustrated that 75% of undergraduates and 88% of postgraduates regard their school years as being the crucial time when decisions regarding careers are made (*ibid*). Further results confirmed that the majority of undergraduates and 88% of postgraduates had a reasonable expectancy to work permanently in the area of their college major (Behr, 1972).

3.6 Research on Career Development

The field of career research is highly fragmented and “a truly integrative career research field needs theories encompassing all types of career definition” (Cooper and Robertson, 1996: 239). Career research in organisations have exclusively focused on processes enhancing linear careers in the past, but this trend has been since revised by the likes of Bailyn (1984) and Hall (1986) with more emphasis and attention falling on more spiral approaches from organisations (Cooper and Robertson, 1996). However, the focus of this research does not permit further elaboration on the fragmented nature of career research, but rather dictates that more emphasis should fall on career research in South Africa.

Career research in South Africa up till 1996 has exclusively focused on the individual and stresses that research on career development must examine the situation in South Africa with specific emphasis on contextual factors around society, politics and the economy (Stead, 1996). It is imperative that research adopts a different perspective and sensitise itself to the needs of the culture within which it aims to impact on, with Prilleltensky proposing, “one cannot practice or conduct research in psychology in a moral vacuum” (Watson and Stead, 2002: 26). Prilleltensky offers a framework with which research in South Africa can be undertaken and carried out in a manner that is culturally fair and unbiased and this is a facet of any good research (Watson and Stead, 2002).

Furthermore, several theorists (Naicker, 1994; Stead and Watson, 1998, Akhurst and Mkhize, 1999) assert that more literature and authors are fast becoming aware of the limited scope of career development research in South Africa (Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000). More importantly, the contention that the individual is a free, autonomous agent engaging in a world free from external restrictions has been subjected to severe criticism (Naicker, 1994; Mkhize, Sithole, Xaba and Mngadi, 1998; cited in Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000).

Stead and Watson (1998, 1999) outline the concept of indigenous psychology in career development, arguing that indigenous psychology should specifically target the indigenous notion of personhood and the assumptions about the specific relationship and interaction between that person and his/ her environment (Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000). Heelas (1981: 3) defines indigenous psychology as the “cultural views, theories, conjectures, classifications, assumptions and metaphors- together with notions embedded in social institutions” (Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000: 1). However, it is Stead and Watson (1998, 1999) who have been pioneers in calling for a type of indigenous psychology in career developments that would be a type or form of psychology that is sensitive to the South African situation and this form of psychology being further normed from its’ people and most significantly hold applicability and utility to its’ people. These authors argue that it is only then that adequate services can be rendered to the people of South Africa in an unbiased and fair manner (Mkhize and Frizelle: 2000).

Stead and Watson (1999) argue for the following recommendations for career development research in South Africa:

- ❖ The need to understand career development in multiple cultural, social and historic contexts,
- ❖ A realisation that all psychology is rooted in certain dispositions of personhood and social contexts and
- ❖ An application of diverse research methods (Mkhize and Frizelle, 2000: 3).

3.7 Conclusion

In summation, this research neither aims to prove or validate or disprove/ discredit any existing theories. The emphasis is to share an understanding on the factors responsible for career choices in individuals and for that reason, an abundance of literature was consulted. I think it fortunate to have such a wealth of knowledge from which to better understand my research and guide my analysis and discussion.

Initially, I presented the traditional theories Holland and Super, also addressing some of the limitations around using their theory in my analysis. I concluded that they failed to account for particular concepts pertinent to this research and their theories hold little applicability to the context of South Africa. Even though these theories are theoretically sound, highly relevant to the career field and have enjoyed widespread support, aspects of their theories are not consistent with the aims of this research. Much of the new literature (Storey; Littleton et al.; Riverin-Simard; O'Doherty and Roberts) posits a new way of thinking for careers to be understood and developed, echoing the sentiment that jobs and the notion of career is becoming more temporary, flexible and fluid (Collin and Young, 2000).

Gelatt (1989) summarises the new literature around careers and career development in an apt manner, stating that individuals ought to adopt an attitude that recognises feelings of uncertainty about the future, embrace that uncertainty and feel positive about it.

The traditional way in which a career is viewed has fast become obsolete and it is becoming more crucial to change one's mindset and move further away from the linear notion of growing in one company till retirement, but expect to change jobs periodically and shape one's career to develop as such.

By providing different perspectives and ideas about career and career development, it is hoped that several relevant themes and ideas for this research have been elucidated.

3.8 Prevalent Ideas Having Currency

At this juncture, it is important to note that even though this research will not make use of theory-led thematic analysis, after a synthesis of the above-mentioned literature, it is noted that the following ideas have currency, in relation to work and career-related issues.

Career Trajectory

- ❖ The notion of a career is moving rapidly away from the traditional concept of career as being linear, towards a more progressive, flexible, flux state of transitions form (Driver, 1996).
- ❖ There's a trend for employees to change/move jobs regularly, i.e.: 4 - 5 year intervals (*ibid*).

Acquisition of Skills

- ❖ The rise of technology may render previous skills redundant, thus, on-the-job learning/development will become more important, to keep abreast with recent developments. Consequently, employees need to analyse past competencies and analyse competencies needed in the future, i.e.: reflect on learning taking place (Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001).

Career Management

- ❖ Employees decide on their own benchmark of success and performance, namely psychological success, as opposed to the traditional measure of success being decided upon by the organisation, i.e.: salary and position (Hall, 1976; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 1997).

- ❖ Employees are expected to adopt new ways of thinking, i.e.: flexibility, adaptability and innovation, regarding their thinking and conceptualising their career development (Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001).
- ❖ There is a need for employees themselves to manage and assume responsibility for their own career (*ibid*).

Nevertheless, there are two points to note. The literature is biased towards certain populations, i.e.: it speaks predominantly of global, Western trends; and it is important not to allow these ideas to completely influence and/ or manipulate the outcomes of this research. Without overstating, it is important to take cognisance of these ideas, but not to let them manipulate the interview or data collection process, let alone the results.

4. Rationale

An abundance of the literature suggests that the world is changing now more than ever into a workerless world (Rifkin, 2000) and that the rapid pace of technological change is increasing the service sector. The results of these significant global changes are that careers, the experience of a career and career development are being altered and it is valuable and worthwhile to study the effect this will have on individuals.

Furthermore, keeping in mind the pervading hypothesis of the global village and larger global shifts in a post-industrialist society, this research will examine these concepts within the context of South Africa and scrutinise the possible extent to which a western, increasingly technological global world, can be used to explain the various economic and career situations in South Africa. The agricultural, service and manufacturing sectors in South Africa are very much alive and this would impact on careers, therefore there is much room for inquiry into the extent to which this global village influences the South African situation.

5. Method

5.1 Introduction

This research makes a distinction between internal and external factors influencing career choice. The latter refers to factors that are derived from the external environment, namely: parental influence or fairly lucrative occupations. The former refers to those personal, intra-psychic reasons or factors that would influence one's career choice, such as a passion for flying or aeronautics (being a pilot) or need to serve the community (being a social worker). This distinction is important because this research will attempt to identify which of these factors prevails at different stages of the individual's life and then account for their progression (or lack thereof) over a period of time and the reasons underlying this.

A focus of this research is to examine the change and evolution of factors influencing careers over a period of approximately ten years. I am interested exclusively in individuals who have completed a degree and then have worked for a period of time. This criterion will allow the participants to provide informed and significant remarks about careers and their personal career development, having completed a degree and having experienced the world of work.

5.2 Participants

The desired population is students who have completed a degree/ diploma (three to four years) and have been in the world of work for a period no less than six to seven years. This choice of population would provide an examination into career choices and career developmental factors over a period of approximately ten years, this being congruent with the primary focus of this research. It would be difficult to locate a population, let alone derive a sample of individuals who have attained a qualification and are currently working. It is noted that a completed degree is a pre-requisite for enrolling for an MBA and since the majority of students in the MBA programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) are part-time, this population provides the researcher with participants who match my research criteria. Thus, this specific selection of part-time, postgraduate students would ensure that participants have, at a minimum, completed a degree and have been working for a period of time (4 - 5 years). This selection guarantees that the participants will be over 25 years old, ensuring that valid and appropriate data is collected.

Due to the research adopting a qualitative approach (face to face, semi-structured open-ended interviews), a sample size of 5 was deemed appropriate. The participants selected were approached on their availability (time constraints).

The sample was derived through non-probability means because there is no list of students who have completed a degree/ diploma and have been working for a period of time (approximately 5 years) that is readily available. More specifically, a purposive

sample method was used because this research is targeting a very specific population of people with full knowledge that this sample may not represent the entire population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Thus, this research will have little or no valid grounds to make assumptions about the broader population and/ or generalise about those characteristics of an entire population. Because this research is aimed at a very specific group of individuals with a set criterion, i.e.: MBA students who have completed a degree/ diploma and have worked for a number of years, there are obvious implications on the sample.

The specific characteristics that are required by the participants require the researcher to carefully choose the population and this research dictates that the sample arise from population of MBA students in KwaZulu-Natal. As a researcher, considering the location, proximity and specific nature of the desired participants, access to the sample did not prove difficult, with the participants being chosen from the MBA class at UKZN Business School of Management, Westville Campus. In addition, the majority of students in these classes were well over thirty years old, this presenting significant congruence for my research.

5.3 Demographics

The five participants were male, aged between twenty-eight and forty-one and of different socio-economic status. In terms of race, three were Indian and two were African (one Nigerian and one South African).

6. Materials

6.1 Interview Schedule

A set of semi-structured interview questions was developed based on literature regarding careers, career development and factors influencing career choice.

6.2 Recording Equipment

The equipment used for the recording and transcribing of the interviews was a Sony Digital Camera.

6.3 Procedure

The rationale behind obtaining qualitative data was to obtain rich, verbal data from participants from which to make inferences. All five participants were interviewed and after these were transcribed, a second interview ensued to clarify misunderstandings on the researcher's part and obtain information omitted from the first interview. The interviews were scheduled at a location and time convenient for both participants and researcher. On average, the first interview lasted approximately forty to forty-five minutes and the second was dependant on the amount of clarification needed. The interviews were transcribed using the short hand written notes taken during the interview and the video-recorded interviews, with the latter rendering the process time-consuming, but highly accurate.

Despite the advantages of using qualitative methods, it is important to take cognisance of the shortcomings associated with the interviewing process. Firstly, due to this research having a sample of only five participants, there is little opportunity to make sweeping statements and conclusions about the general population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Secondly, the researcher took necessary steps to ensure that the interviews and interview process were conducted in an ethical manner, mindful of issues around confidentiality.

However, the subject matter in this research did not contain any material of a harmful or damaging nature. Nevertheless, issues around listening, observing and asking the appropriate questions, resulted in well-prepared and *ethical* interviews being conducted. I was careful to remain objective while dealing with subjective data of this nature. As is a downfall of interpretative methods, the researcher took special care to avoid the common novice analyst's errors of summarising, thematising, *psychologising*, stating the obvious and flights of fancy.

Implementation of Task

Participants were informed of the ethics underpinning this research, i.e.: they were asked permission for the interviews to be recorded. They were encouraged not to rush, speak as much as they desired and that the purpose of the interview was to gather information, not to test or trick them in any way.

Finally, they were also informed that even though some of the questions or ideas may seem repetitive, they had been carefully constructed.

6.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative method of interviewing yields valuable, rich data. Keeping in mind the significant amount of data that was obtained, mostly opened-ended and descriptive in nature, the researcher used an interpretative method best suited to analyse this form of data, i.e.: Thematic Analysis (TA).

Qualitative analysis is not chiefly concerned with understanding objective reality, rather, it emphasises on questioning the existence of such a reality (Haynes, 2000). This type of research aims primarily to penetrate the internal processes of the research participants and see how they perceive the events and experiences of the world. Essentially an individualistic approach, there are several advantages with this approach, as is justified by its usage for this research.

Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to identify particular themes occurring in the data and the themes are then categorised according to recurring statements or ideas. This process allows the researcher to best utilise and discuss the content, themes and ideas in the data collected from the interviews and serves as an effective and procedural means to simulate the results.

Before proceeding, I will distinguish between theory-led thematic analysis and the more common approach, namely, inductive thematic analysis (more commonly referred to as thematic analysis). The latter was considered more appropriate for this research. In thematic analysis, relevant themes that emerged were identified and labelled after data collection, with this entire process of inductive thematic analysis having the following brief, but effective stages:

- Transcribing: after the interviews are completed, the data has to be transcribed so that a typescript of the results can be obtained. This will also provide the researcher with an understanding of the data that will make further analysis easier (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley and McNeil, 2002).
- Reading: this involves reading through the data thoroughly and noting down any interesting items, concepts and pieces of information that bears relevance to the research topic. At this point the themes have not yet emerged and the researcher is only identifying those bits of information relevant to the topic (*ibid*).
- Sorting: this involves breaking up the data in analytically relevant ways, such as meaningful sentences, phrases, ideas or concepts that can be grouped together. This can be done by physically cutting and pasting the codes on pieces of paper or on the computer and the themes will emerge (Hayes, 2000). This is a crucial stage because the themes are by no means finalised but are a dubbed protothemes (*ibid*) and represent the beginning of a theme. It is here that each theme is examined, given a provisional name and a written form of analysis

begins. After a first draft, the researcher then re-visits each theme and each transcript again to identify any and all information relevant to the topic from the transcripts. This ensures that the researcher avoids the common mistake of over looking something important (Ulin et al., 2002).

The process of sorting each theme against each transcript may take a long time, but necessity calls for a thorough analysis to ensure the most reliable and valid analysis and results. After a second working of the transcripts and themes, the researcher will now be able to take each theme and construct its final form, which is done in three parts:

- Naming or labelling each theme,
- Definition of the theme and
- Identification of all data bearing to the themes (Hayes, 2000).

This approach will allow the researcher the luxury of identifying anywhere between fifteen to twenty themes (Ulin et al., 2002). This approach itself has a simple, yet highly effective process to follow that will make for interpretation and analysis.

7. Presentation and Discussion of Key Findings

This discussion will be scaffolded by referring to the literature and theory reviewed. For the purposes of this discussion, references to the five participants in the sample will be coded- R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5, respectively.

7.1. Theme: Initial Career Interest: Internal Factors

During the initial stages of people's career (after completing high school) both internal and external factors were shown to influence career choice, with external factors predominating somewhat. Before I discuss this, I will address the most predominant internal factors.

Internal factors are those private and personal to the individual. Firstly, vocation was borne out of an initial interest and passion in a particular field or area of interest (e.g.: automobile design, building engines and business), with participants stating:

I think it must have been about standard six hey. I wanted to become an architect and I was always fascinated with the design, being involved with some sort of design work and building and bridges. That fascinated me (R1),

I spent most of my afternoons, or if I'm not at school, I will spend most of my days with the business, overseeing and everything. So that's where I think my interests for business and the kind of the business side developed (R3) and

I used to draw a lot, right from when I was a kid, so I thought about architecture
(R5).

Secondly, participants devoted considerable thought to job satisfaction, i.e.: need for their vocation to be personally rewarding, challenging and enjoyable, with one participant stating: *I knew that I needed to be happy and enjoy my job, but I wanted to be challenged as well* (R2).

Thirdly, to achieve a desirable level of job satisfaction, a degree of self-evaluation followed, i.e.: assessing one's strengths and possible career paths, with one participant stating: *I sort of did a self-evaluation and realised that this was where my talents and skills were* (R2). This self-evaluation resulted in individuals developing a strong drive and desire to succeed in their chosen field. However, as much as this internal process of self-evaluation is applauded and initial career choice was initiated by interest and passion towards a particular field- I must question the extent to which young minds (eighteen/ nineteen-year-olds) are able to make decisions regarding their future. Surely the assessment of one's competencies (relating to fixing appliances in the house or understanding and operating the mechanics of a car engine) with such limited exposure and experience is not a valid prediction of future success in that field (E.g.: engineering)? One participant stated:

As a teenager, actually, I was 18, when I made this decision and for me to say I could go down on a particular career for my life, was a decision I didn't think about at that time (R5).

In summation, even though interest, passion, factors relating to job-satisfaction and a level of self-analysis regarding their strengths and competencies were valid internal factors, they fail to explain why specific paths were chosen over others, or what external factors motivated this choice. For this reason, I will investigate the relationship between internal and external factors.

7.2. Theme: Initial Career Interest: External Factors

Firstly, in terms of actually choosing one career path, individuals were strongly guided by artefacts in their immediate context (house, backyard) and micro socio-economic environment (local neighbourhood, community). To clarify, interests in engineering, medicine and business resulted from experiences relating to fixing appliances in their household, operating on cars in the yard and visiting the community hospital, with participants stating:

From an early age, at about standard five, I was always stripping engines, fixing cars, fiddling with car parts and that sort of thing. You know in my dads yard and all the neighbours vehicles (R2) and

So my father used to take me the general hospital then....so...the only profession I could really understand and it was meaningful or something, it medicine (R5).

In addition, participants indicated that they preferred the hands-on approach, with two participants stating: *I was more hands-on orientated (R1) and I realised that I had qualities and capabilities that were very hands on (R2)*. Thus, initial interests were

strongly shaped from those facilities (or lack of) in their immediate environment. None of the participants in the sample developed interests towards a career path/ field to which they had no direct exposure to, e.g.: computers, technology, website design, etc. This highlights the possibility that they received limited exposure and education about the diversity of career paths/ fields available, with participants stating:

I think schools need to improve their guidance in terms of career guidance. To me they weren't beneficial at all. They didn't give me any direction (R1).

One didn't have very good career guidance from high school (R3).

It would have interesting to investigate whether career choice would have differed in the same participants, if they received education about the diversity of careers at an early age. Without making a sweeping statement too soon, it is understandable that external factors would influence not only personal interests, but also on career choice and as per the key findings of this research; they have more influence over internal factors.

Secondly, actual work experience and listening to the stories/ tales of their parents were highly influential factors. This encouraged individuals to attain a qualification, secure a good job and grow within a worthwhile, fulfilling career, with participants stating:

I worked as a casual at a beverage manufacturing company and it was here that I gained invaluable work experience. It was here that I had realised the distance between studying and working. I had a good reality check and it hit me really

hard. The world of work exposed me to the real world and I think this was an invaluable experience (R2) and

I could not see myself sitting behind a desk and working with figures the whole day (R4).

In addition, participants took their parents words to heart and expressed a need to be different from their parents, with participants stating:

I realised that I did not want to go into a job, work from the bottom up (like my dad), start at the very bottom of the chain and work there for 20 years (R2) and

I can't see myself sitting in one job for the rest of my life. I can't see how he sees patients in-and-out everyday for the rest of his life he's going to see patients the same thing in-and-out. It's not challenging (R4).

The working world provided a reality check for individuals and coupled with their parents' words echoing in their minds, these two factors encouraged them to enter the working world, climb the corporate ladder quickly and expect a challenging, dynamic career- changing their mindsets. Subsequently, their career paths were also being changed by new needs and drives and they expressed a need for their careers to be personally fulfilling, enjoyable and challenging, with participants stating:

There's a diversity of engineering ... that's my point of view and I thought the scope was finding a position I would enjoy (R1),

I knew that I could prove to myself that I could succeed in this field, as long as I used my strengths and interests (R2) and

That's what drove me. I enjoyed finance (R4).

Finally, in terms of external factors influencing career choice, parental and familial support and guidance knew no bounds, with parents being entirely supportive, irrespective of career path, with one participant stating, *I think all other extended family members they also contributed and said go and pass and ... they support yes. No, there was no pressure, no pressure at all (R3).*

This research did not conclude that parental influence was the pioneering external factor, but other research confirms that parental influence is a highly critical and influential factor (Roe, 1957; cited in Osipow, 1973; Werts, 1969; cited in Behr, 1972). Even though parents did not encourage any one career path or field there was overwhelming support to attain a qualification, with participants stating:

I was brought up in was very competitive environment and quite inclined towards tertiary education and studying (R1) and

Both (referring to parents) have been very supportive of my career. They have always encouraged me to firstly, study at a tertiary level and secondly, to pursue whatever career I wanted to (R2).

Parental influence cannot be overstated, but that this pressure to attain a qualification and attend a tertiary institution would indirectly influence eventual career trajectory (i.e.: going to a tertiary institution would mean the difference between entering a technical, secretarial or professional career). Furthermore, studies have confirmed that high percentages of undergraduates (75%) and postgraduates (88%) had a reasonably expectancy to work permanently in their area of their college major (Behr, 1972).

In addition, Holland did argue that certain factors were responsible for selecting an occupational environment- this is vastly different from career choice. Even though this research can confirm three out of the five factors that Holland mentioned (i.e.: family and personal aspirations, occupational history, educational opportunities), I am restricted from using his conclusions for previously acknowledged limitations (Osipow, 1973: 44/ 45).

In summation, the relationship between internal and external factors is such that external factors have considerably more influence during the initial stages of one's career. I will now examine the development and transition of these factors over a period of time and the subsequent relationship to each other.

7.3. Theme: Relationship between Internal and External Factors during the latter Stages of People's Career.

Findings indicated that external factors had more influence during the latter stages of people's careers. However, even though there was a steady increase in the very same initial internal factors influencing careers (interest, passion, job satisfaction and heightened levels of self analysis) findings also demonstrated that these same internal factors became strongly dependant on an entirely new set of external factors. These are listed below.

- Potential to grow and develop in the job.
- Ability to acquire and learn new job specific skills.
- Need to broaden one's knowledge and increase skill base.
- Finding a balance between job-satisfaction and financial remuneration.
- A greater concern for self-management, i.e. setting personal goals and taking steps towards those goals.

Instead of analysing each factor, I will evaluate their significance as a whole. At this juncture, I need to define external factors since the above list may be similar to internal factors. External factors are those that influence individual career choices and direction but reside from the external environment and/ or work situation (e.g., salary, benefits, skills required for the job and location of the job). The multitude of change occurring in the job-market and external environment has caused people to understand and plan their careers differently.

The list of external factors highlights that the self is now an active agent that is able to assess the work situation and then make decisions deciding the course and future of his/ her career. Furthermore, after considering these factors two important ideas have currency.

Firstly, these external factors are remarkably different from those initial external factors (socio-economic environment, work experience and parents) but remarkably similar to the core characteristics of much of the newer literature on careers (21st Century Career Planning model, Protean career) specifically in terms of the factors informing careers in the 21st century. Newer literature on careers reveals that career models and approaches tend to emphasise the self, self-development and the self as being responsible for his/ her own career (the Protean career cites self-development at its core- Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 2001).

Secondly, the very fact that these specific set of factors are influencing career choice in contemporary times is indicative of a notable, serious transition in organisational functioning, consequently altering peoples experience of career. The literature on careers presents this rapid transition by way of it being a *natural* progression in organisational functioning and almost *inevitable*. This literature would have its readers believe that the new and different forces acting upon careers in the 21st century are a result of factors relating to globalisation and changing organisational structure. However, organisations and employees will understand and account for this notable shift/ transition very differently and independently of each other.

These external factors present employees as being active, thinking individuals who are fully aware of the factors affecting their career. More specifically, from the employee's perspective, similar to the findings of this research, one concludes that employees recognise the new needs of the job and gaps in their repertoire of skills. Consequently, they recognise and understand the new and different factors influencing their careers, resulting in them taking steps to improve their set of skills, thereby advancing their own career prospects and trajectory. Thus, I must question whether this newfound activity is an initiative of employees wanting to further their careers or indicative of an underlying insecurity about their job and fear of not being able to counteract these new forces impacting on their career.

This concludes the analysis of external factors affecting careers in contemporary times and their relationship to internal factors. Now, I will critically account for the changes in people's career choices and development, in relation to broader environmental and organisational changes. After examining the key findings of this research, it becomes necessary to include the *ideas having currency* (section 1.8) in the analysis since these ideas were remarkably similar to the conclusions of research, as much as this was not expected. The three most significant themes (relating to career trajectory, acquisition of skills and management of career) will be discussed, respectively.

7.4. Theme: Career Trajectory

In terms of career direction during initial stages in one's career (i.e.: adolescent/ leaving school stage), findings indicated that participants had a reasonable expectation to work in their chosen career for life and look forward to a successful, interesting career, with one participant stating:

Ya, I did hey ... to me the field is very interesting ... there's always something... dynamic ... its very broad ... there's always new, new technology that you can learn and I like learning new stuff (R1) and

In terms of a long career, I thought it important to maintain a career for a long time and that the career would be in the engineering bracket (R2).

Consequently, participants chose subjects and courses before and during the course of their diploma/ degree that corresponded to their career choice. Even though some participants experienced problems relating to courses, subjects, negative marks or loss of motivation, individuals were determined to remain true to their chosen vocation and persevere, even when if things got tough. Two participants stated:

You have tough years. You have tough courses. You fail. But not once did I want to bail out. I think I'm a person that once I take on the challenge I would want to finish it. I wouldn't leave it half way or something (R1) and

There were times when I failed tests, lecturers who will penalise you for nothing, but one thing that I've learnt from my mom was that you mustn't look on the

negative side of anything, if you are given any situation, look at what positives are there in that situation and capitalise on those negatives (R3).

In relation to the literature, this research confirms that final career plans are made during the college period in most cases, but disagrees with the claim that “career plans are amenable to change during college in response to new information and condition” (Freeman, 1971: 181/ 183). Ever mindful that his sample was based on 10 000 males, Freeman is unable to validate his claims and the lack of research in this area does not permit the researcher to consider this standpoint.

Finally, participants of this research had different careers to their parents and even understood their careers differently to their parents, with participants stating:

The career thinking has changed, from what, from my father and old folk that I know of, even my managers who have been here in this company for long periods of time, like 30 years, in some cases 20 years and things, so I feel that it has changed quite a lot (R1).

I'll tell you what my strategy is. End of the day, you know, you don't wanna work till you sixty with one foot in the grave. So obviously by the time you reach 50, you want to obviously have a decent nest egg put away (R4).

Furthermore, apart from the fact that only a few parents had primary school education (let alone tertiary qualifications) is further evidence that the choices, direction

and experience of the 21st century career is vastly different from that of previous years. I will now focus on career trajectory during the later stages of people's career.

Findings indicate that employees expressed an interest to remain in their current jobs and adapt to the respective changes, rather than change jobs and career paths entirely. The nature of the job has changed with heightened levels of responsibility and diversification, due to the effects of globalisation, advent of technology and the need to think and compete internationally. This has made jobs and careers more dynamic and challenging, with participants stating:

The job is very interesting and challenging. Everyday poses a new challenge to you and I'm constantly working on new and different projects, so that's very exciting (R1),

The job has changed enormously of late. I am working on several global projects that are new, innovative and very exciting. It is bringing a whole new dimension to my job (R2) and

I think everybody sees themselves as part of the global market (R3).

Individuals have recognised the need to be flexible and innovative in their career choices and are acquiring more skills and knowledge that are applicable to the job, but stated unambiguously that they would definitely change jobs within a 5-year period, should there be no room for growth and development in their current job, with participants stating:

I don't see myself taking the contract again... there's no room in the job to grow, so I'm moving on... there's no future in this job (R3).

The job is good for now, but I want to grow and develop in this company for the next 5 years and then assess the need to move elsewhere (R4).

Thus, this research supports the contention that jobs change periodically, i.e.: every 4 - 5 years (Driver, 1996).

Furthermore, there is strong evidence to suggest that careers are moving rapidly away from the traditional concept of career towards a more progressive, flexible, flux state of transitions, illustrating further support for Driver (1996) and Littleton, Arthur and Rousseau (1979; cited in Collin and Young, 2000). Individuals are still making the necessary commitment to one vocation for life (after all, this *is* where their interests and passion lies) but not exclusively to one job/ employer.

In my research sample, two individuals held five different jobs in approximately eleven years, therefore supporting the claim that newer forms of career exhibit a pattern swaying away from "a steady, upward progression with a single employer towards a broader definition that embraces any sequence of employment-related positions" (Arnold, 1997, p. xiii; cited in Collin and Young, 2000: 33). Further evidence suggests that the traditional idea of one employer/ company for life is becoming obsolete with one participant stating:

I'm going to make a lifetime commitment to the field, area, but not the job, the improvement of knowledge is very important to me. I'm looking to grow progress and develop within this particular job/ field (R1).

At this juncture, I will synthesise the account of career trajectory. Even though participants planned to remain true to one vocation for life, there was a general tendency for them to think in terms of 5-year periods. Participants expressed no intention of remaining loyal to one employer for longer periods of time and expressed an intention to move on/ change employers should they experience no room for growth and development in their current job; no matter how dynamic and challenging the job. Participants stated:

Currently, I would like to stay in the company (company name withheld) for at least, for another least 4 - 5 years before I move on (R1) and

I'm not looking to move onto another job; I want stability for 5 - 10 years, before I move on (R4).

After reading these statements, one is compelled to ask- what has become of the employer-employee relationship (or lack thereof)? The evolution of this relationship is indicative of employees feeling the need to adapt to the current job by investing in shorter job-specific courses and more specialised courses; using the justification that this is being done to enhance their job and increase their set of skills.

However, if employees are working within a 5-year time frame, it is possible that they have a reasonable expectancy to leave their current job and move jobs periodically and furthermore, that this acquisition of skills is possibly more of a short-term solution than a true commitment to the job. This 5-year period has implications for the organisation, in terms of the company's long terms goals, commitment to employee relations and employee's commitment to company growth (not withstanding the costs of re-training new employees). More importantly, if organisations know that employees are going to move periodically, I must consider who will benefit from this new career pattern and why? I hope to address this question in my analysis.

This research identified that job security has assumed a new connotation. Participants have indicated their intention to move jobs regularly, from one organisation to the next. This renders the phrase *one company for life*, obsolete, with statements such as:

Currently, I would like to stay in the company (company name withheld) for at least, for another least 4 - 5 years before I move on (R1) and

I'm not looking to move onto another job; I want stability for 5 - 10 years, before I move on (R4).

But, one participant mentioned that job security was a minor concern, stating:

I'm not even concerned about losing my job, there is reduction of staff and then, to improve efficiencencies, there are cut backs, but I'm not worried (R3).

However, there was consensus that individuals are secure in their jobs, disproving the trend that new economic shifts affecting organisational structure have affected job security. Even though the participants in the sample are less vulnerable than low-paid, low-skilled, poorly educated workers who are more affected by large-scale lay-offs and retrenchments, this research found that participants were unperturbed by threats of job security.

In addition, I must be critical and consider why employees are feeling *so* confident and appear to be unperturbed by the shifts in their external environment? As much as employees derived confidence in their current job by increasing their set of skills, one cannot help but think that this acquisition of skills is indicative of an inner, perhaps latent *fear of losing* my job. I will unpack this acquisition of skills more explicitly and ask- how different is it from a paper chase or a race for qualifications?

5. Theme: Acquisition of Skills

This research identified two different reasons why employees are increasing their set of skills. Firstly, shorter courses would supplement their qualifications and increase specialised knowledge required for the job, thereby supporting claims that the rise of technology may render previous skills redundant, rendering on-the-job learning more important. Because the current job is far from stagnant and always in a state of change, employees thought it better to acquire specialised knowledge and skills, rather than change jobs. Participants confirmed the need to learn and develop more knowledge and skills on the job, with two participants stating:

The job itself has changed my perceptions of work and the several changes that have occurred of late. I am still keeping my hands very busy on several projects at any one time and I am also learning new and different skills (R2) and

You need the specialised skills, tools and knowledge that a degree/ diploma cannot offer, especially in the IT field. You must keep abreast with recent developments (R4).

Furthermore, if on-the-job learning is critical, what are the implications for previously acquired qualifications? Learning is assuming a new dimension and the role of one's qualification could be, in some instances, fairly limiting. If I examine the reasons for attaining a qualification, findings illustrated that a qualification is still a prerequisite for some jobs/careers and does impart the necessary knowledge to operate within specific fields/ careers, e.g.: medicine. But, results indicated that the 21st century career requires employees to acquire additional skills and specialised knowledge to supplement their qualification, with participants stating:

A degree gave people the theoretical, conceptual understanding, but no people or process skills (R1),

The job has changed so much ... that there is much travelling, workshops and skills needed on a global scale (R2) and

When you talk about people management that you learn on your own (R4).

Furthermore, participants are recognising new changes in the job and investing in product specific skills to become familiar with new products and learning new competencies; thereby supplementing their degree with on-the-job accreditation, especially those working in highly specialised fields, with one participant stating:

You know we have various partners, the likes of HP ... and we do keep up to date. But I only attend the high-level product pickings and obviously they set the certification levels where we get certified and I am certified on a number of levels (R4).

This research suggests that employees are enrolling for smaller, shorter certification courses aiming to supplement their qualification with job-related/ specific knowledge. But this will become problematic if employees are claiming to arm themselves with job-related knowledge, knowing that they are most likely to leave the job in a few years time. In a sense, employees could be thinking, 'I'm going to leave here one day so I should get the most out of this company while I still can'; consequently, showing greater concern for acquiring transferable skills that will benefit them in any organisation. One participant stated that *there's a definite need to be multi-skilled (R3).*

Secondly, the need to acquire skills espouses a new way of thinking about careers. This confirms the trend that conceptualising the new career and respective career development does require employees to be flexible and innovative in their thinking (Storey; Littleton et al.; Riverin-Simard; O'Doherty and Roberts; cited in Collin and Young, 2000). Considering the changing nature of the job, participants

showed greater concern for learning new skills to match new job requirements and would only consider changing jobs if there was no room for growth and development in their current job but not due to an inability to match any new job requirements.

Furthermore, employees understood their acquisition of skills as them embracing change and empowering themselves and adding value to their personal growth and development. This is indicative of employees realising the need to analyse past competencies and competencies needed in the future, i.e.: reflect on learning taking place, this being the very essence of the Protean career (Schreuder and Theron, 1997). In addition, participants indicated that they were completing their MBA for personal reasons, stating the following:

I am doing this MBA for personal reasons and personal growth more than anything else. I am not expecting it to enable me to get paid more or get a promotion. I am hoping it will add to my skills and make me a more accomplished person (R2),

For me again personally, in the way of preparing myself ahead, to come to a decision, I've studying for an MBA (R3) and

I came back for my MBA ...because I'm trying to equip myself with better so that I can still, ya with more skills, so that I can still be in a position to provide for my family needs (R5).

Thus, participants did not expect to obtain a higher position or receive more remuneration with an MBA qualification, instead hoped that an MBA would add value to their personal lives, improve self-development and add to their set of skills. But, one must be critical and remember that an MBA is a qualification that imparts very specific business, top-level management skills that are highly transferable.

Findings illustrated that employees are aware of current changes in organisational functioning and trends in the job market, with one participant stating:

There's a greater need to compete globally, greater emphasis on the learning and development of new skills (R3).

The fact that one participant did state, *wherever they go they sell themselves at the higher price (R3)*, is indicative of a causal relationship between acquisition of skills and job security. Keeping in mind the notion of job security, this analysis must address the ominous perception that technology and change will replace employees and decrease levels of job security.

This research concludes that employees aren't threatened by the rise and progression of technology, with one participant stating, *we cannot talk about career, without talking about technology (R5)*. Apart from harbouring thoughts of adaptability and flexibility, employees are embracing the new changes in the workplace (teamwork, electronic means of communication and flatter organisational profiles) by learning to adapt and acquiring new skills; supporting the conclusions of Muchinsky (2003) who stated that employees need to become more adaptable.

However, even though employees are feeling secure in their jobs by adding to their set of skills, one could argue that their need for more credits and skills is indicative of increased fears of job loss or a fundamental notion that they need to absorb as much knowledge and skills from their current employer, in the shortest time, before moving on. It is possible that employees are feeling a degree of pressure and anxiety for fear of becoming obsolete and expendable.

Findings indicated that employees are aware of the recent economic and organisational shifts (downsizing, rightsizing and large-scale retrenchments) due to heightened levels of global competition, with one participant stating:

The shift in the underlying process of decision making, the economic shifts, the environment shifts, how it impact on your decisions, how it impacts on your day-to-day operational processes, so that's what I've learnt (R3).

Consequently, it is possible that employees are feeling pensive regarding their careers. Thus, I must critique whether this process of skill acquisition is a proactive move from employees or a reaction to fears of becoming redundant. The fear of becoming redundant will impact on the psychological contract between employee and employer, consequently affecting their working relationship.

6. Theme: Management of Career

The literature contends that employees are now themselves deciding on the benchmark of their success and performance, namely psychological success, as opposed to the traditional measure of success being decided upon by the organisation, i.e.: salary and position (Hall, 1976; cited in Schreuder and Theron, 1997). Even though this theme/idea did not surface in the key findings, the researcher cannot conclude that this is not a *concern* for employees.

In terms of salary, employees stated that they were always striving to find a balance between the remuneration package being offered and the level of job satisfaction/ challenge, with no preference for either/ or. Participants stated:

There will always be a toss up between the price tag of the job I am offered and whether it (the job) brings me challenges (R2).

That's the bottom line, job satisfaction and money (R4) and

The other thing is balancing what I enjoy to do and the reward and the financial reward I get for it (R5).

However, employees did state that they would strongly consider changing jobs within a 5-year period, should they be unable to move up in their job/ organisation. Thus, position is still a prevalent factor in determining success in one's career. In addition, two participants indicated less emphasis on salary and greater emphasis on

other factors such as closeness to family, relationship with God, quality of life, and personal fulfilment. One participant stated:

No matter how attractive the job, I wouldn't take it and I've always believed, initially the focus was on money, material things will make you feel comfortable, but having this spiritual aspect of my life, I'm beginning to see... if you don't have peace with you and peace with God, you can't enjoy this stuff (R5).

These measures can't be labelled as psychological, but employees are using other benchmarks to determine their level of success, not exclusively related to salary and position. This new benchmark of success epitomises the core essence of 21st Century Career model that "success is seen as embracing not only traditional terms of economic gain, but also for individuals spiritual and emotional development" (Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 147/ 8).

The management of one's career is the most ubiquitous theme in the findings, which confirms that employees are being called upon to manage their careers rather than reliance on the organisation to do this. Employees are exhibiting greater concern for self-development, self-evaluation of skills and management of their careers, all relating to quality of life, with participants stating:

I also have to look at self-development and other opportunities ... not only in the company but also in your personal life (R1),

I don't think it's more important to watch the percentage or calculation (of qualifications gained), rather the ability and technique of using what you have gained at work (R2) and

Previously, some tools (referring to business) were not there and actually, one was not even thinking about ... now because they are there, they start thinking about them and how are you acquire them, how you gonna use them and so I think empowering oneself (R3).

This emphasis and focus on the self is indicative of employees exhibiting a need to move forward and grow in their careers and much of the new literature emphasises that the 21st century career emphasises the self and self-development- the Protean career cites the self and self-development at its core (Schreuder and Theron, 1997).

This analysis has portrayed a positive impression of the new literature on careers responsible for shaping and informing the 21st century career, but I must be critical of this. The Protean career could be interpreted as an appropriate mechanism for organisations to transfer the responsibility of managing careers directly onto employees, presenting it such that employees will think it more beneficial for them (employees). This new literature, it would seem, assists organisations to absolve their levels of responsibility in terms of career management, by encouraging employees to assume more control.

Furthermore, the Protean career advocates values of “individual freedom and growth and further characterised by high degrees of mobility (Hall, 1976)” (Schreuder and Theron, 1997). Certain employees might not be willing and able, let alone possess the sufficient tools to manage their own careers, i.e.: a floor worker who has been operating a lever for several years might not so inclined to manage his own career progression when his primary concern is to take home a salary at the end of every month.

Careers in the 21st century have assumed a new definition as a result of broader economical and environmental factors and peoples perceptions of this change has resulted in different connotations of career direction, job security and management of career. Indicative of these workplace changes and altered perceptions, I will evaluate the implications of this new employer-employee relationship (or lack thereof).

Firstly, the new literature on careers posits that recent changes in the workplace and subsequent changes in the employer-employee relationship has occurred by way of it being a natural progression in organisational functioning and almost inevitable. However, organisations and employees will account for this transition very differently. It appears as if there's one single source pervading all organisations that is administering a new set of rules and protocol to people, in terms of their career choices, how they should perceive their careers and the factors influencing their careers.

Organisations, faced with global pressure to excel and increase profit margins through cutting costs, are making various concessions such as subcontracting, notions of

part-time work and flexi-time. Essentially, they are undercutting everything that employees previously understood in terms of their careers. Thus, with careers becoming more temporary, flexible and fluid (Storey; Littleton et al.; Riverin-Simard; O'Doherty and Roberts; cited in Collin and Young, 2000), there is a new asymmetrical distribution of power where organisations have completely absolved themselves of much responsibility, altering the employer-employee relationship.

Secondly, people's perceptions and understanding of their careers has been eroded by virtue of changing career patterns and this change is indicative of employees understanding, perceiving and planning their careers differently. This change has targeted their internal frame of reference, inculcating that a notion that forces beyond their control has eroding everything that they previously understood and knew about careers. It almost seems that this transition in the employer-employee relationship is more beneficial to organisation and dis-empowers employees.

Finally, the notion of the psychological contract and organisational loyalty has taken on new proportions, indicative of the fact that people's subjective experiences, how they construct their careers and where they position and place themselves in their career path and organisation, is radically different. Muchinsky (2003) accounted for the psychological costs for temporary workers engaged in low-pay, unstable employment, especially when organisations are dampening the existence of a permanent full time workforce. In addition, "one must question the long term gains to be accrued to individuals, organisations and society by the growing reliance on a temporary workforce" (Muchinsky, 2003: 448). Subsequently, the role that organisations play and

the role that employees are expected to play in terms of their career development has changed drastically.

8. Limitations of the Present Study

A problem arises around the size and composition of the sample.

- a) The sample is relatively small and precludes this research from making any substantial claims. Due to the small number of subjects, the research is unable to substantiate its conclusions, leaving much room for consideration in further studies.
- b) This research included exclusively English speaking subjects and people with other languages as their mother tongue were excluded, leaving the research with a limited ability to generalise and make assumptions about the broader population. In addition, the sample comprised only of males, having little relevance or applicability to females.

Furthermore, some criticism must be levelled against the technique of data analysis, where the data was collected and information analysed by one individual. Owing to the highly interpretative nature of analysis, it is possible that the researcher had some pre-conceived notions/ or themes whilst conducting the interviews and/or analysing the data. Mindful of this, the researcher made every effort to remain objective during the process by taking the following steps:

- ❖ By remaining very close to the literature by reading and re-reading to ensure that the true, correct meaning was derived, as opposed to the researcher's interpretation of the literature and second
- ❖ Only interpreting what the findings and results had stated and not what the desired results were.

The data collected yielded very rich information. The limitations of this study prohibit the researcher from engaging in a thorough, more in-depth analysis of the data, which would unpack deeper, more intimate reasons behind career decisions and development. During the analysis, the researcher ensured that he did not over analyse or interpret, mindful that this is a mini-dissertation. However, this study could be expanded to explore the relationship between organisations and employees and unpack latent reasons for decisions informing careers and career trajectory.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The abundance of literature provided the researcher with a wealth of concepts and ideas for the analysis of this research, most notably, the new literature on careers. The ideas having currency and key findings of this research saw the emergence of several critical issues, most predominantly the new, rather distorted employer-employee *relationship*.

The concept of career has assumed a new identity in the 21st century. Significant changes in organisational practice have altered the employer-employee relationship,

redefining the concepts of employer and career. Several micro and macro economic factors have affected this relationship such that organisations benefit more. In a world where global competition and technology have invaded the workplace, organisations have redefined the definition of employees, possibly to benefit themselves (organisations) and further their profit margins. People's very perception of themselves, their needs and their careers have been given new meaning. The concepts of an employee, once a valuable asset to the organisation for lengthy periods of time (twenty to thirty years) has now been reduced to an almost expendable entity that has been entrusted with the responsibility for his/ her own career, with organisations absolving their duties completely from this equation.

The tug-o-war between employees and organisations has left people feeling uncertain, pensive and partially *disillusioned*. Even though Gelatt (1982: 252) talks about embracing "positive uncertainty" and the much of the literature implores employees to adopt flexible and innovative thinking styles in relation to their careers, this does not excuse the fact that the very essence and meaning of what it meant to *work for a company* or *have a job* has been entirely undercut, by more sinister forces (organisations) having more menacing implications (for employees).

The findings of this study have been used to make the following recommendations:

This research has largely explored the changes in the growth and development of careers and perceptions of career from an employee's perspective. It would be valuable to investigate the same phenomenon from an organisations point of view, i.e.: the

changing nature in the organisations perception of its' employees careers and investigate whether the organisation has employed any procedures or interventions that would account for these changes.

The aim of this research was to identify career changes and perceptions of participants with a qualification but macroeconomic and global factors affect all populations (some more than others) not only those with qualifications. Future research could generate a sample that would include subjects across a wider spectrum of work, i.e.: such as those individuals in the informal sector of South Africa.

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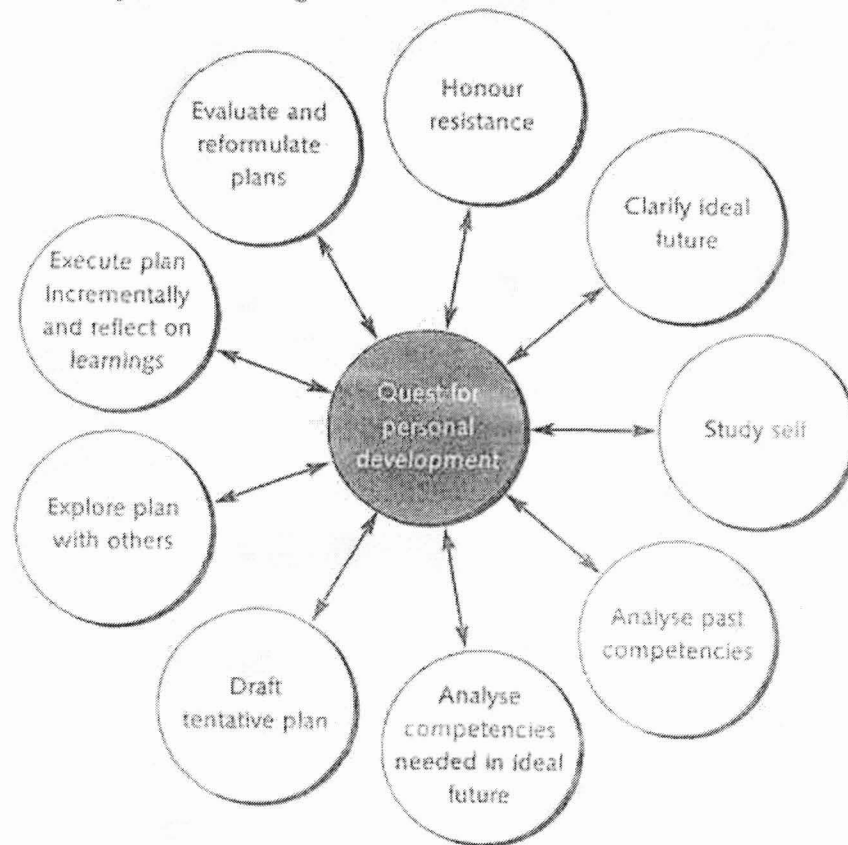
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11. Appendix A21st Century Career Planning Model

CAREERS: AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Figure 6.4
Twenty-first Century Career Planning Model



Source: "Otte and Kahnweiler, 1995:6. Redrawn from business Horizons (Jan/Feb).

Copyright of the Foundation for the School of Business at Indiana University. Used with permission" (Schreuder and Theron, 2001: 148).

Declaration: I affirm that this work is my own.

Rasigan Naidoo

21 September 2006

TUTORIAL ASSIGNMENT

Student name: Carina Vangen

Student number: 206526440

Due date: 03.10.06

Critically comment on how an organizational vision can be a transformational tool by identifying 3 sins in the article and discuss the harm they can cause in blocking transformational change

3 SINS AND THE HARM THEY CAN CAUSE IN BLOCKING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Lack of a shared inspiring vision of the future: This means that the leadership and the staff within an organization can't see or imagine the same future. They might have different plans for the organization or they see it going in different directions. This means that the leadership and the staff will work and strive for different objectives and then they don't pull the organization in the same direction. The reason for this confusion could be the management's failure of communicating their vision to the staff, but it could also be that they have different incentives for working in the organization. The managers might strive for recognition and investments while the staff work to create a good environment in their working place (Stephen Asbury).

No measurement and communication of progress: This will have an impact on the organization's ability to learn from its former mistakes, but it can also lead to a situation where there's no motivation for the staff to keep up the good work. If the organization is going to transform or improve it's important that everyone involved know that they're going in the right direction. Also, if the manager doesn't inform about what needs to be done differently or what's left to do, it won't be done. It's in everyone's interest that there's honesty about success and failures and that they are celebrated or reported.

Insufficient capability and capacity to lead and manage change: Asbury claims that few executives have experience of successful transformation because they lack the necessary skills for the job and can be too close to the problems for an objective perspective. This is of great importance when it comes to the ability of transformation. If the manager doesn't know how to carry it through it's not very likely that the other ones involved know it. In the case of a project it could be helpful to get someone from outside to assist change, because this person could be more objective and wouldn't take it that personally that change is needed.

HOW AN ORGANIZATIONAL VISION CAN BE A TRANSFORMATIONAL TOOL

It is obvious that for an organization that is trying to cope with transformation it could be very harmful not having a shared vision, because everyone involved will then pull the organization in different directions and it could lead to dissatisfaction within the organization and a lot of confusion.

Having an organizational vision could be a transformational tool because then everyone involved is familiar with the objectives of the organization and they know how they are going to achieve them. When the management and the staff visualize the same future and direction, they are more likely to achieve their goals. If they're all aware of a specific goal, they know how to reach it and they agree on the time period in which it should be completed.

A part of this organizational vision could be the shared awareness of various external of future oriented threats that may prompt or require an organizational response in the foreseeable future. It should be prepared to respond effectively to the outside world, before a crisis emerges (Bryson 1995: 83).

Using a SWOT analysis could make an organization more familiar with its status and see more clearly what strengths and weaknesses it has. When these characteristic are clear and acknowledged it's easier to know what changes to make and maybe it can be easier to make the changes come through (Bryson 1995: 83).

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, my name is Rethabile Qhobosheane, an Honours Quantity Surveying student in University of Kwazulu Natal. I'm conducting a research on the effectiveness of relationship marketing between Quantity Surveyors and clients; in other words, 'HOW DOES A QUANTITY SURVEYOR ATTRACT AND KEEP HIS CLIENTS.' You are part of randomly selected sample and pledge to keep all your responses strictly confidential. If I could have no more than 5 minutes of your time to ask a few questions, it could make a valuable contribution to this study.

Date: 01 OCT 2006

Where you have been given a choice of answers, please indicate your choice by marking it in **bold** font.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What category do you fall under? **(Bold)**
 - a. **Architect**
 - b. Property Owner
2. How long have your firm been operating? **(Bold)**

1-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	15-20 years	More
-----------	------------	-------------	-------------	-------------
3. How many staff members do you have? USE CONTRACT WORKERS
4. Where is your company located? 250 CHELMSFORD ROAD, GLENWOOD, DURBAN

II. SUPPLIERS RELATIONSHIPS

5. How did you know the Quantity Surveyor you are working with? **(Bold)**
 - a. Referral
 - b. Advertisement
 - c. Friends (Buddies)?
 - d. Other (specify) THROUGH NOMINATION BY CLIENT + LONG STANDING ASSOC + FRIEND
6. What made you select that Quantity Surveyor amongst others? ABILITY+GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP
7. Have you ever referred someone to your Quantity Surveyor and why? YES BECAUSE OF THEIR ABILITY AND GOOD EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH THEM
8. What makes you change Quantity Surveyors? BAD WORKING RELATIONSHIP + POOR ABILITY (in that order)
9. Do you want to change the Quantity Surveyor you gave your last project to? **(Bold)**

YES NO

I work with many qs at the same time. I have had occasion to specifically "dump" qs for future work mainly because of incompatibility.

10. Which of the following does your Quantity Surveyor do? **(Bold them)**

- a. Call often
- b. Visit them
- c. Braai/cocktail party
- d. Take them out on holidays/ fun days
- e. Provide additional service
- f. Play games with them e.g. golf
- g. Specify others NONE OF THE ABOVE. NORMALLY CLIENT
RECOMMENDS QS AND GENERALLY ACCEPT THIS NOMINATION.

11.1 Do you think it is important for the above activities are done?

YES, NO

11.2 If YES, why? _____

III. MARKETING PRACTICES

'Relationship Marketing is a concept of getting and keeping customers.'

12. Does your Quantity Surveyor implement any relationship marketing strategy? **(Bold)**

YES NO DON'T KNOW

Some do, most do not

13. Do you appreciate the way your Quantity Surveyor market his services? **(Bold)**

YES NO

90% yes 10 % no. the smaller the job the less appreciative.

13.1 If NO, how do you think he should market it? _____

14. Rate the importance of relationship marketing, scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most important. Word of mouth best form of marketing - 3

15. Do you get a chance to interact with your Quantity Surveyor's employees? **(Bold)**

YES NO

IV. CLASSIFICATION DATA

16. This question is asked in order to classify the responses into groups. Let me remind you that all information will be kept strictly confidential.

❖ What is your position in the organization? SOLE PROPRIETOR