

**Curtin Business School  
School of Management**

**Youth Career Choices: A Comparison of Industry and Ballet**

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Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
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# DECLARATION

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To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date:

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

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In an increasingly competitive global environment the need for highly skilled, resilient workers is paramount. This study responded to this need with an investigation of the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice. In particular, it explored the career aspirations and drivers of career choice amongst two distinct cohorts of secondary school-aged people and the work experiences and retention drivers of a cohort of early career workers. The first phase of the study investigated the career aspirations identified by secondary school-aged young people aged from 14 to 17 years, including those enrolled in full-time secondary schooling (completing Years 11 and 12 tertiary entrance studies) and those enrolled in full-time professional dance programs who were completing their schooling via distance learning programs. The second phase of the study examined the nexus between career aspirations and work reality for young people entering a career, again encompassing the two distinct cohorts: early career participants in mainstream industry and early career dancers. The study findings help to articulate what it is that young people want from a career, the type of work they enjoy, and the characteristics of their work experiences that may impact retention. As such, it has significant implications for decision making related to future education, career and modes of work, and to drivers of performance, engagement and retention.

In seeking to answer the research question: ‘What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?’, the research design utilised a qualitative research methodology with comparative and content analysis approaches framed in a constructivist paradigm. Data collection involved 46 participants in semi-structured individual or focus group interviews, and the study was structured into two phases as described above. Additional interviews with five retired dancers served to explore and validate the dance participants’ work expectations and realities in this under-researched profession.

Findings suggest that decisions about career choice are often made early in life, tend to be intrinsically driven, and are founded upon young people's exploration of career, self and identity. Career attraction appears to be clearly associated with a passion for the type of work, a career calling, or a sense of vocation. Similarly, career retention seems to have little to do with money or the achievement of extrinsic rewards: irrespective of gender, work/life balance emerged as a key consideration across both cohorts. The study has made a significant contribution to the theoretical framework for the Foci and Bases of Commitment with the inclusion of a possible selves construct. This inclusion will inform the development of strategies that improve career attraction and retention.

Developed countries face significant challenges in developing and sustaining a workforce that is equipped for an uncertain future and whose members have longer and more precarious working lives. The findings of this study suggest that the workforce preparation provided to young people by secondary and tertiary institutions is inadequate. The results reveal that dancers, even during early training, tend to have a more accurate and realistic understanding of future career realities than early career aspirants in other sectors. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for organisations to re-evaluate their work design, development and engagement strategies in order to successfully meet these challenges.

Limitations of the study include a geographical focus on Western Australia and a relatively small sample size. Despite these limitations, the study provides a sound basis for further research and investigation into the career choices of young people, linkages between possible self and work commitment, and the role and impact of passion and career calling in work retention.

This is one of few studies that have provided a voice for young people in relation to career aspirations and expectations. The findings provide a greater insight into the significant impact of the career aspirations and choices of young people and what ignites and maintains a passion for their work.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT FOR ENQUIRY.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Career Attraction and Retention .....	3
1.2 Generational Context .....	7
1.3 The Performing Arts Context .....	10
1.4 Nature and Aims of the Thesis .....	14
1.5 PhD Research Questions.....	16
1.6 Methodology.....	16
1.6.1 Ethics Approval.....	18
1.7 Significance .....	18
1.8 Thesis Chapter Structure.....	19
1.9 Concluding Comments .....	19
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.0 Introduction .....	22
2.1 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers .....	24
2.2 Motivation .....	26
2.3 Intrinsic Retention Drivers.....	29
2.3.1 The Individual and Identity .....	30
2.3.2 Relationships .....	35
2.3.3 Characteristics of Work .....	36
2.4 Extrinsic Retention Drivers .....	38
2.4.1 The Individual and Financial Rewards .....	38
2.4.2 Relationships .....	39
2.5 Job Satisfaction.....	40
2.6 Commitment .....	42
2.6.1 Foci and Bases of Commitment.....	44

2.7	Generational Impacts on the Workforce .....	49
2.7.1	The ‘Generation Y’ Workforce .....	50
2.7.2	Generation Z: Our Future Workforce .....	54
2.8	Ballet Career Attraction and Retention Drivers .....	55
2.9	The Nature of Career .....	59
2.10	Career Choice: Industry Comparisons .....	63
2.10.1	The Public (Government) Sector .....	64
2.10.2	Community Based/Not-for-Profit Organisations .....	67
2.11	Career Fact and Fiction: Congruence Between Career Aspirations and Work Reality .....	68
2.12	Linkage to Research Questions.....	70
2.12.1	Key Research Question .....	70
2.13	Literature Framework .....	71
2.14	Conclusions .....	72

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN ..... 74**

3.0	Introduction .....	74
3.1	Research Purpose.....	75
3.2	Research Design .....	76
3.2.1	The Research Paradigms.....	76
3.2.2	Qualitative Research Methodology .....	77
3.2.3	Constructivist Paradigm .....	80
3.2.4	Ontology.....	82
3.2.5	Epistemology.....	82
3.3	Data Collection Methods .....	83
3.3.1	Phase One: Career Aspirations of Secondary School-Aged Youth .....	86
3.3.2	Phase Two: Early Career Workers.....	90
3.3.3	Comparative Approach.....	93
3.3.4	Sample Size .....	94
3.4	Data Analysis.....	95
3.4.1	Transcribing.....	95
3.4.2	Coding .....	96
3.4.3	Analysis Process.....	99
3.5	Research Credibility .....	100
3.6	Ethical Issues .....	101
3.6.1	National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC) Guidelines and Requirements .....	101
3.6.2	Working with Children Requirements.....	101
3.7	Data Management.....	102
3.8	Concluding Comments .....	102



## **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS ..... 104**

4.0	Introduction .....	104
4.1	Overview of Data Collection Strategy .....	105
4.2	Phase One Findings .....	106
4.2.1	Categories .....	107
4.2.2	Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Cohort One – Secondary School Students .....	109
4.2.3	Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Secondary School Students.....	112
4.2.4	Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Secondary School Students .....	112
4.2.5	Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Secondary School Students .....	118
4.2.6	Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Dancers-in-Training .....	118
4.2.7	Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Dancers-in-Training .....	120
4.2.8	Comparative Analysis between the Two Key Groups .....	125
4.3	Phase Two Findings.....	127
4.3.1	Categories .....	128
4.3.2	Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Mainstream Industry Cohort .....	129
4.3.3	Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Mainstream Industry Cohort.....	129
4.3.5	Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Ballet Cohort .....	134
4.3.6	Comparative Analysis Between the Phase Two Cohorts .....	138
4.4	Job Retention Checklist .....	142
4.5	Comparative Analysis Between Phases One and Two .....	146
4.5.1	Career Attraction .....	146
4.5.2	Career Retention.....	147
4.6	Phase Two: Supplementary Interviews with Retired Dancers .....	148
4.6.1	Insights into a Professional Ballet Career.....	149
4.6.2	Dancing as a Career Today.....	150
4.6.3	Work/Life Balance .....	151
4.6.4	Career Sustainability.....	151
4.7	Conceptual Framework.....	151
4.8	Conclusions .....	153
4.8.1	Career Attraction and Retention Drivers – Phase One .....	154
4.8.2	Career Attraction and Retention Drivers – Phase Two.....	155
4.8.3	Career Attraction and Retention Drivers: Phase Two Retired Dancers .....	156

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS ..... 157**

5.0	Introduction .....	157
5.1	Career Attraction and Retention Drivers for Young People .....	158
5.2	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers .....	159
5.2.1	Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: The Individual and Identity.....	159
5.2.2	Relationships: The Intrinsic Nature of Social Exchange Theory and Possible Selves.....	164

5.2.3	Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: The Individual and Identity .....	165
5.3	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers .....	170
5.3.1	Intrinsic Career Retention: The Individual and Identity .....	170
5.3.2	Intrinsic Career Retention: Characteristics of Work.....	171
5.3.3	Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers: The Individual and Identity .....	173
5.4	Organisational Commitment and a New Model for Foci and Bases of Commitment..	174
5.5	Ballet as a Career Choice.....	177
5.6	Congruence Between Career Expectation and Work Reality .....	179
5.6.1	Realistic Job Previews .....	180
5.7	Career Success .....	181
5.8	Study Limitations .....	181
5.9	Future Research Opportunities .....	183
5.9.1	Contribution to Theory .....	184
5.9.2	Contribution to Practice.....	186
5.10	Conclusions .....	187

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>190</b>
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<b>APPENDIX 1 .....</b>	<b>215</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 2 .....</b>	<b>216</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 3 .....</b>	<b>218</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 4 .....</b>	<b>219</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 5 .....</b>	<b>227</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 6 .....</b>	<b>228</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 7 .....</b>	<b>229</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 8 .....</b>	<b>233</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 9 .....</b>	<b>234</b>
-------------------------	------------

<b>APPENDIX 10 .....</b>	<b>235</b>
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## LIST OF TABLES

---

Table 1.1	The Study Participants.....	15
Table 1.2	Thesis Chapter Structure.....	19
Table 2.1	Chapter Two Structure.....	24
Table 3.1	Alternative Inquiry Paradigms.....	77
Table 3.2	Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues .....	215
Table 3.3	Data Collection Strategy.....	85
Table 3.4	Sample Size by Phase .....	94
Table 4.1	Chapter Four Structure .....	105
Table 4.2	Phase One Focus Groups .....	106
Table 4.3a	Key Categories for Analysis by Cohort, Determined from Focus Groups .....	107
Table 4.3b	NVivo Tree Node Coding: Sub Categories .....	108
Table 4.4	Secondary School Participants' Career Choices .....	110
Table 4.5	Dancers-in-Training Age and Years of Training .....	119
Figure 4.1	Comparative Analysis Between Both Cohorts: Career Retention Attributes (By Participant Response Rate).....	126
Table 4.6	Phase Two Sample.....	128
Table 4.7	Key Categories: Early Career Participants.....	129
Table 4.8	Percentage* of Least Enjoyable Career Attribute Comparison .....	140
Table 4.9	Percentage of Most Enjoyable Career Attribute Comparison.....	141
Table 4.10	Job Retention Rankings .....	143
Table 4.11	Top Five Job Retention Factors .....	144
Table 4.12	Least Important Job Retention Factors .....	145
Table 5.1	Chapter Five Structure.....	158

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

---

Figure 2.1	Framework of Attraction and Retention Drivers Identified in the Literature .....	71
Figure 3.1	Research Process .....	75
Figure 3.2	Shiva’s Circle of Constructive Inquiry .....	81
Figure 3.3	NVivo Categories .....	97
Figure 4.2	Conceptual Framework.....	153

# CHAPTER ONE: THE CONTEXT FOR ENQUIRY

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## 1.0 Introduction

The attraction and retention of highly skilled and costly labour has become one of the most challenging issues of our times; therefore understanding the attraction and retention drivers of young people is critical. This study investigates the attraction and retention drivers affecting the career aspirations and choices of young people. It does this by exploring the career aspirations and expectations of young people within two distinct cohorts: secondary school-aged young people from 14 to 17 years; and young early career workers aged 18 to 29 years.

Issues like the ageing populations of developed economies, growing skill shortages and an increasingly competitive global environment, make it apparent that the need for highly skilled workers in the workplace is paramount (Duxbury and Higgins 2008; Heath 2006; AHRI 2008; Intergenerational Report 2010; Rowland 2004). In Australia, the term ‘a war for talent’ is often used to describe the significant issue of labour shortages that exist nationally. Younger workers in particular are becoming increasingly mobile, demonstrating what appears to be a lack of loyalty to their employer (Eisner 2005; Kelan 2008; Kelan and Lehnert 2009; Martin 2000; Martin 2005; Sheahan 2005; Solnet and Kralj 2010; Terjesen, Vinnicombe, and Freeman 2007). This suggests that financial rewards are not always enough to keep these workers engaged within an organisation. This is particularly evident during Western Australia’s current resources and mining boom, which has seen a broad range of semi and highly skilled workers in the enviable position of being able to ‘*name their price – and get it*’ (Macdonald 2010). For example, the Gorgon Development in Western Australia’s North West employed thousands of low-skilled construction workers who earned a minimum of A\$150,000 per annum (Macdonald 2010). Even so, resource sector companies have indicated that attraction and retention of skilled and unskilled workers was a problem and that dollars alone do not retain the workers (Rowland 2004). This problem is even more pronounced among younger workers (Intergenerational Report 2010; Rowland 2004).

Further research needs to be undertaken to determine what keeps a worker engaged and motivated to stay (Intergenerational Report 2010). Given the increasing costs of labour as well as the problem of keeping that labour (Intergenerational Report 2010; *The Reflexive Generation: Young Professionals' Perspectives on Work, Career and Gender* 2009; Rowland 2004; Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003), an investigation of the role of intrinsic rewards in engaging and keeping young workers is both timely and important. How powerful is the role of the supervisor or manager as a mentor to the skilled worker? What of the role of the peer group or team to which these workers belong? Is there enough work variety or autonomy, and how much empowerment is there to make decisions? What about work flexibility and creating a work/life balance? These factors have long been identified as causes of turnover (Mobley 1979) and are likely to impact a young person's engagement and decision to stay with an employer (Levenson 2010; Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons 2010). Indeed, recent studies suggest that the average organisation retains just 50 per cent of its graduate recruits five years into their careers (Earl et al. 2011, citing Sturges & Guest (2001), 250). There is a corresponding body of new research within the HR arena that suggests worker engagement is driven by individual motivators; and many employers are responding by producing a strategic roadmap that individualises approaches to engagement and retention (Palmer, 2011).

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase of the study investigated the career aspirations as identified by their career choices of full-time secondary school-aged young people from 14 to 17 years (completing Years 11 and 12 tertiary entrance studies) and those enrolled in full-time professional dance programs who were completing their schooling via distance learning programs. Participants discussed their career aspirations in six in-depth focus group interviews. For young people, 'career' tends to be defined within a more narrow context, reflecting the way in which they conceptualise the future within the immediacy of their goals and perceived working lives (Devadason, 2008). Accordingly, the term career is defined in this study within the constraints of a profession to which they aspire to work within. The definition takes into account that career and profession are defined as the one construct in the Foci and Bases of Commitment framework (Blau 1989).

This provided a more realistic context within which young participants could consider their progression from education and training to career.

The second phase of the study examined the nexus between career aspirations and work reality for young people entering a career, again encompassing the two distinct cohorts: early career (those working in their chosen field for less than five years) participants who had completed full-time secondary school and tertiary level training and/or education; and early career dancers whose main source of income was from working as dancers, primarily within Australian dance companies. Interviews with school leavers and graduates in their early career phase enabled comparison between the two cohorts, including the similarities and differences in their aspirations and values. It also facilitated comparison with Phase One data, and foregrounded a series of validation interviews with dancers who had retired from their dancing careers. These retired dancers also fit within the age cohort of Generation Y.

This thesis is structured into five chapters. The introductory chapter describes the background literature on attraction and retention, and some of the issues that arise in relation to generational differences and expectations. The reason for choosing a dance cohort as a comparative example to mainstream examples is also explained. This leads to the research questions for the study. Next, the methodology and significance of the study are discussed and a brief overview of the thesis is provided in Chapter Three. Chapter Four outlines the data analysis and findings. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the career attraction and retention findings and implications, the limitations of the study and future research opportunities.

## **1.1 Career Attraction and Retention**

The attraction and retention of labour into the workforce are critical issues for most industrialised countries, particularly those with high levels of literacy, education and standards of living. Attraction, in a human resources context, is the term used to identify the means by which potential candidates are located and encouraged to apply for existing or anticipated positions within an organisation and retention refers to keeping those workers within the organisation (Nankervis et al. 2011). However, attraction also refers to the broader context of the way in which careers are chosen by

individuals, and it is these factors that are considered important in such career choice decisions, playing a significant role in the selection of work (Amundson, 2007).

A dynamic and strategic approach to attraction and retention is essential to achieving the effective management of human capital. Indeed, attraction and retention are key components of the human resources framework: a number of authors argue that as the global demand for skilled talent increases, so will the need for effective, flexible and responsive attraction and retention strategies (Rowland 2004; Carless and Wintle 2007; Nankervis et al. 2011; Rolfe 2005; Smethem 2007; Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003; De Vos and Meganck 2009; Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; Burke and Ng 2006; Horwitz, Heng, and Quazi 2003; Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons 2010). The type of individual attracted to and retained within the workplace has significant implications for education and development programs, with highly skilled workers requiring a less costly investment. Highly motivated, satisfied and high-performing individuals also require a less intensive investment in training and performance management, and this in turn reduces turnover costs. Individuals in today's workforce are said to have different values and expectations about work, with a strong desire to be treated fairly, with respect, and to have a balance between their work and family lives (Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011). They are also the most highly educated workforce ever experienced (Burke and Ng 2006, 86). In addition to this, the increasing complexity of the labour market and the growing reality of skill shortages mean that individuals are assuming more proactive roles in finding work, and are less willing to take work that does not fit with their personal values (Amundson, 2007).

Boshoff and Mels (2000) identify the potential implications of affective attraction strategies and recommend ascertaining the extent to which job applicants associate these with their chosen career. Support for the organisation's objectives, shared values such as pride and respect for the profession's traditions and image, personality traits such as high self-esteem, confidence, as well as a need for achievement and high levels of intrinsic motivation, all lead to superior work performance (Boshoff and Mels 2000, 269). This study suggests that commitment to, and passion for, a career reduces the likelihood of dissatisfaction and turnover. A person's approach to career retention is also recognised as being extremely individualistic, demonstrating



a reduced level of commitment and increased propensity to leave if their personal expectations are not met (Chew and Chan, 2008). This mismatch between the individual needs and the employer is even more heightened with younger workers, leading to organisations having to make adjustments in order to attract and keep them (Amundson, 2007). The assertion made in this thesis is that intrinsic rewards and inherent commitment to career choice have a more significant impact on retention than traditional and often short-term extrinsic rewards such as the payment of bonuses or wage rises.

The analysis of young peoples' aspirations – their hopes and dreams – is critical to not only understanding who they aspire to be, but also to their views on the opportunities and constraints within the labour market (Devadason, 2008). Flowers and Hughes (1973) make the interesting point that a great deal of research emphasis has been on the reasons workers leave, or that the relatively neglected question of understanding why they stay is of vital importance. It is also highly individual; there are times when one worker will stay in a job under conditions that would cause another to leave. Why do they stay? This question is yet to be comprehensively answered by the current literature, particularly in relation to highly mobile younger workers. Central to answering this question is understanding the future work expectations and career aspirations of the respondent groups in this study - Generation Y and Z. Generation Y is defined here as those born between 1980 to 1994, and Generation Z are those born after 1994. Differences among these generations are discussed in Section 1.2.

It is also vitally important that organisations lay a solid foundation for the employment relationship (Dibble 1999). However, the existing studies on what drives commitment and satisfaction, and therefore willingness to stay with an organisation, suggest few employers have actually succeeded in doing this. For example, a comprehensive United States study of 601 human resource managers reported that 55% of firms had attempted to minimise turnover, but that only 10% had actually succeeded (Boshoff and Mels 2000). Sherman and Bohlander (1992) suggest that the costs of staff turnover are conservatively estimated to be up to three times the monthly salary of the departing worker. This is extraordinary given the

costs of staff turnover (departing employee payments, down time, costs of recruiting new incumbent, impact on others in the organisation).

Thompson (2000) suggests that an employer can easily spend \$100,000 per employee in exit interview, severance pay, hiring and lost productivity costs (p. 68). Turnover also has a detrimental effect on the performance of remaining workers and thus on overall organisational effectiveness (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006). Boshoff and Mels (2000) list commitment to the organisation, profession, the work, and/or the supervisor as a particular foci, as negatively correlated to the intention to resign. They refine this by suggesting that organisational commitment is a key mediating construct for other forms of commitment. Interestingly, their research indicates that a lack of commitment to the career itself is the most important antecedent of an intention to resign.

The influence of the supervisor on staff retention and organisational commitment has received more attention in recent years. In particular, the mentor, who is often the supervisor, appears to play a strong part in the decisions of younger workers to stay or leave an organisation (Rowland 2004). Eisenberger et al. (2002) found evidence to suggest that workers who believe their supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being have increased perceptions of organisational support, which is in turn related to decreased turnover. This link between perceived organisational support and decreased turnover is only one of a variety of variables (as cited in organisational support theory) that impact staff retention, and is therefore quite generalised. For example, Lee and Olshfski's 2002 study of both paid and volunteer fire fighters linked turnover to commitment, identifying that pay is not necessarily a determinant of this commitment. They found that paid workers can be more committed to their supervisor than the organisation, although volunteers in their study were more influenced by their peer group and the organisation as a whole.

Whichever the industry, it is clear that voluntary turnover of highly skilled workers who hold organisation specific knowledge and expertise is problematic because of knowledge drain, with implications for future human resource planning and job requirements (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006, 203). Carmeli and Weisburg also find that highly satisfied and emotionally attached workers tend to display low turnover

intentions, suggesting that organisations need to invest in practices that reinforce such attachment.

An emotional attachment is clearly present within the dance sector, and closer attention to the particular attraction and retention motivators present amongst the workers in this industry is warranted. As outlined in Section 1.3, workers employed in the dance sector are highly trained and passionate about their career, yet are generally employed under precarious terms and conditions of employment. A study of the ballet cohort's career aspirations and experiences provides potential for interesting comparative analysis against those employed in mainstream careers.

## **1.2 Generational Context**

Age diversity is at the top of the agenda for many human resource professionals, and responding to generational changes is a crucial issue for attracting and retaining the best talent. Despite some controversy about the validity of defining values and aspirations by generation, there is no doubt that individuals are influenced by their experiences and environment, and for this purpose the generational distinction serves as a useful categorisation. A generation is defined as a group which shares the same birth years and significant life events (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008, citing Westerman and Yamamura 2007) and has a similar world view defined by social or historical events (Crumpacker and Crumpacker 2007; Smola and Sutton 2002). Whilst much has been written about the generational cohorts in the workforce, there is no universally accepted definition of who belongs to which generation; some literature refers to Generation Y (also known as Millennials) merely as those under 30 years of age (Kelan 2008, 38). Typically, Generation Y are said to have been born between 1980 to 1994; however, these dates vary from a start date of 1977 to 2003, suggesting a rather loose term of reference. Generational labels notionally fit within fifteen year date spans, so for the purposes of clarity Generation Y will be defined within this study as those people born between 1980 to 1994. This is the cohort represented in Phase Two of the study. The school-aged cohort of this study (Phase One) fit into the category of Generation Z or 'Generation Next' (Matthews 2008). Again there is limited agreement about which dates specifically constitute this group, so for clarity and definitional purposes, Generation Z is defined here as those people

born after 1994. Given the different classifications argued by different researchers, the focus of this study is on young people within 14 to 29 years of age.

The Australian Government's 2010 Intergenerational Report, produced by the Australian Commonwealth Government, highlighted Australia's declining labour force participation and ageing population as critical issues for the economy. The proportion of the population aged 5 to 24 years has decreased from 37% in 1970 to an estimated 26% in 2010, placing increasing pressure on workforce participation rates with significant implications for employers. This will become increasingly important as older workers retire and there is increasing reliance on younger workers. The key characteristics of these younger workers are briefly described below.

Among the traits claimed for Generation Y in developed countries is that they are independent thinkers and the most highly educated generation to enter the workforce. They are also extremely computer literate and financially empowered from growing up in a healthy economic environment (Burke and Ng 2006; Kelan and Lehnert 2009, 3). Many Generation Y's are already in the workforce or are working part-time whilst still in secondary and tertiary education. Traits that distinguish Generations Y from others in the workplace include:

1. They are special, vital, and full of promise for the future of our society and the world;
2. They are sheltered, having been smothered with safety rules and devices;
3. They are confident as a result of their trust and optimism;
4. They are team-oriented, having been raised on sports teams and group learning;
5. They are high achievers; as a result of higher school standards and an instilled sense of accountability;
6. They are pressured and feel the need to excel and do well; and
7. They are conventional, rather than rebellious (Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley 2010, 266).

The Generation Z cohort is entering the final years of secondary education and making decisions regarding career goals and/or tertiary study choices. Unlike their

Generation Y counterparts, Generation Z's are growing up in a more conservative economic environment that has been marked by periods of severe downturns and global crisis. The young people constituting this generation tend to be extremely imaginative and lateral thinkers, and have very different skills and expectations to the current workforce (Matthews 2008). They have been labelled the “silent generation” for the time spent online, and are expected to be a flexible and mobile workforce working in what will essentially be casual and short-term contract environment. They will also be a scarce resource among an ageing population (Matthews 2008). The work expectations and career aspirations of these two generational groups have implications for their education and career choices, as well as the way they work, their drivers of performance, and decisions to stay.

Certainly, a defining shift that is characteristic in shaping both generations is the changing nature of work and the workplace. It is clear that environmental and technological changes have had a significant impact on the education, communication styles and the expectations of the generation labelled as Y. While there is debate that generational differences do exist and that young people have displayed similar characteristics throughout the decades, it cannot be denied that significant technological shifts, the growth of social networking, and corresponding changes to the way work is performed, have a major impact upon the way each generation view work.

Within this context, this research seeks to examine the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice. In particular, it seeks to discover the career aspirations and drivers of career choice amongst the two distinct cohorts of secondary school aged young people as well as the work experiences and retention drivers for the early career workers. The need to analyse the perceived career aspirations of young people, rather than their anticipated career, is an important point of clarification made by Primé et al (2010) on the basis that career aspirations and expectations are different from a desired occupational choice and can have quite different future outcomes. This research will explore the key similarities and differences in career aspirations and work experiences between the two distinct cohorts of young people. The goal is to identify the influence and impact of different career choices on the commitment and intentions to stay of those

who are employed. Apart from studying members of this generation broadly, those aspiring to, or working in the dance sector are targeted as a special case. The reasons for selecting the dance sector are outlined in the following section.

### **1.3 The Performing Arts Context**

Why study the performing arts? Workers across the performing arts sector need to be highly committed to their profession as for many it offers precarious and low paid work (Throsby and Hollister 2003). As such they present an extreme case for identifying motivational attraction and retention drivers. For many artists, training is not a matter that ends with the acquisition of a formal qualification; the vast majority recognise that they must update and enhance their skill set throughout their careers in order to remain a valuable commodity (Throsby and Hollister 2003). Indeed, the concept of lifelong learning, which has become an HR catch cry over the past few years, has long been a reality in the arts (Throsby and Hollister 2003). For these workers to succeed they need to compete globally in a unique creative sector where positions are limited and competition is high (Florida 2005). The second cohort in this study are drawn from dance, in particular classical ballet, which it could be argued is one of the purest art forms as it has remained, to all intents and purposes, unchanged over hundreds of years. However, the data available on the economic earnings of professional ballet dancers make it clear that they are extremely low paid given their level of training, skill development and the number of hours worked (Throsby and Hollister 2003).

Irrespective of the length of training completed, work in the arts is characterised by relatively long and/or irregular working hours and short-term contracts (Throsby and Hollister 2003; Throsby 1994). The commitment of ballet dancers to their art form is impressive. This commitment starts many years before they actually start working professionally, usually by the age of 10, with at least six years of full-time training prior to entering the industry in a paid capacity. It is necessary to devote significant amounts of time and energy to highly specialised training if there is any hope of a professional career. Careers are often short-lived (Throsby 1994; Throsby and Hollister 2003; More, Carroll, and Foss 2009; Bennett 2009), with most dancers facing the challenge of a career transition in their mid to late 30s.

In terms of earnings, in 2000-2001, half of all Australian workers across the arts sector earned an income of \$37,000 per annum, but only half of that income was arts related (Throsby and Hollister 2003, 45). Dancers were the lowest paid cohort, earning less than \$25,000 per annum, incorporating all earnings (representing both arts and non-arts work). As Throsby and Hollister point out, if one compares the formal training of dancers with other occupations, they would fit comparable categories for teachers, dentists, lawyers and scientists. By comparison, for the same year, these professional grouping earned approximately \$54,400 per annum (p. 45). At that time only 9% of Australian artists, across the board, earned more than \$50,000 per annum for their creative practice – no dancers earned in this range. Earnings in 2006 indicate that over a third of workers in cultural occupations received less than \$600 per week, with dance teachers earning less than \$400 per week (ABS 2006). On average, half of a dance artists' income is earned outside of the sector (Bennett 2009, 27).

These fairly dismal rates of pay are mirrored in Canada and the United States, although larger, unionised ballet companies such as New York City Ballet pay significantly more than non-unionised and/or smaller companies (Jeffri 2005). Jeffri (2005, 346) also concurs with Throsby and Hollister's findings, suggesting that "*In the majority of countries profiled, studies suggest that dancers are the most poorly paid artists. In Canada, among all artistic occupations, the average income of dancers was one of the lowest, with an average annual income of just US\$11,100 per annum, which was less than half the annual average income for the entire labour force.*"

Despite their low income, the working week for professional ballet dancers is generally Monday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm, but this is often longer during rehearsal and performance schedules. Contracts of employment are usually twelve months in duration or less. This is often because of the heavy reliance on Government funding, sponsorship and philanthropy to pay overheads and wages. The arts sector has always relied on government funding and community support for its existence, including the employment of staff. These traditions of the arts have their place firmly anchored in medieval times when the arts and entertainment were used as a way to bring people together in their community. The arts provided a focal point for

discourse on social and political conditions in an entertaining manner, and they contribute enormously to a country's cultural, social, psychological and economic well-being (More, Carroll, and Foss 2009). The research in the Cultural Compact report for Western Australia (*A Cultural Compact for Western Australia: The 10 Year Challenge* 2008) identified that cities which placed highly in 'liveability' rankings, were those that had a rich and vibrant arts and cultural life – such as Vancouver, Zurich, Geneva, Auckland, Paris, London, New York, Tokyo, Vienna and Melbourne.

Dance has been part of Australia's landscape for some time, and played an important role in Australian social life as early as 1789 and by the 1840s theatrical dance (of which ballet forms a part) had become an attraction in Sydney theatres (Australia Council 1981, 9). The first national ballet company (now The Australian Ballet) was established in 1962 and a national ballet school followed in 1964. This was followed by the formation of the Australian Council for the Arts in 1968 (Australia Council 1981, 10). The Australian dance sector is currently thriving, representing a high-worth creative capital workforce (More, Carroll, and Foss 2009, 2). In Australia, 6,569 people were employed in the Performing Arts in June 2007, and of these 49% were performing artists (ABS 2009). Whilst difficult to extrapolate from the existing data, dance artists constitute the smallest performance artist group in Australia (Bennett 2009, 27). Interest in the arts by the Australian population is also significant as 50% of the population aged 15 years and over attended at least one performing arts performance during 2005-06 (ABS 2009). However, this figure represents both paid ticket and free public performances. Even though dance globally heavily relies on Government support, the level of funding frequently changes in response to economic turbulence. Nonetheless, Gandossy, Tucker and Verma (2006) argue there is a need to nurture and 'hang on' to these talented workers because of their high degree of innate talent and many years of education, development and experience. Gandossy et, al (2006, 67) argue:

*“Talent intensive workers always find themselves at the heart of the war because of the differential quality of performance, the rarity of the innate talent, and the long time it takes to develop a seasoned pro.”*



In a knowledge economy that values workers' attributes of creativity, innovation and creative problem solving, the creative value of dance artists' capabilities – intelligence, emotional rigour, self-reliance, collaboration, communication skills, organisational abilities and presentation skills - can contribute significantly to economic outcomes (More, Carroll, and Foss 2009, 2), yet performers within the ballet sector work in relatively unstable work environments (Throsby and Hollister 2003). This thesis specifically examines ballet, which represents one facet of dance. Its rich historical background, along with being a facet of the dance employment sector with strong representation by significant organisations (West Australian Ballet, Australian Ballet Company, Queensland Ballet), as well as being a significant full-time employment option for dancers, make ballet a legitimate and interesting sector for research.

Career paths are generally clearly articulated for dancers but take an inordinate amount of time to achieve. Many, because of talent, competition for roles, physical characteristics or time spent in the company, will never reach the 'pinnacle' of a dancer career: a Prima Ballerina or Premier Danseur. Generally, most male dancers are expected to retire between the ages of 36 and 40 and female ballet dancers even earlier, between 31 and 35 (Kogan 2002, 9). By the time they have reached their tenth year, most professional dancers have retired. However, it must be noted that these figures are based on a US study and in reality, it is more culturally acceptable for European and Russian dancers to perform for a much longer period of time.

It is likely that no one group is purely driven by extrinsic motivation, and extrinsic factors may be of even less importance to this group. A main objective of non-profit performing arts firms is to make their product available to as large an audience as possible. Practitioners tend to have a 'crusading spirit' in that the larger the audience that can be attracted to a performance the happier they are (Throsby and Withers 1979, 15). Workers within the creative sector, few of which will be employed within companies, often care more about originality and technical prowess achieved than about their pay and working conditions (Caves 2000).

Whilst public interest in the performing arts and its artists is enormous across the globe, the systematic study of performers as an occupational group is exceedingly

limited (Kogan 2002). Increasing research attention has been focused on the economic value of performing arts and artists over the past 40 years (Baumol and Bowen 1965; Filer 1986; Frey 1997; Johnson and Chang 2006; McCarthy et al. 2001; Menger 1999; Throsby and Withers 1979; Throsby 1994; Throsby and Hollister 2003; Towse 2001). There does not appear to be any research into the attraction and retention drivers for the ballet profession.

The organisational context demonstrates a unique set of characteristics that can affect research findings about workers. Ballet dancers whose work is positioned within a company make an excellent subject for a study of the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and a worker's intention to stay (retention). This study aims to discover what it is about this particular group of workers that makes them so passionate, not only about their art form, but also about particular employers. Passion for their art does not of course necessarily mean that a dancer will stay with their employer – this passion and the highly specialised skill set is easily transferable to other companies. The notion of a 'calling' to career (Hall and Chandler, 2005) is further examined in Chapter Two, as is whether this applies to other careers driven by internal, psychological factors. The existing literature appears to lack exploration of the linkages that exist between the psychological constructs of identity construction, possible selves, career calling and the relationship among these that affects commitment. Thus, developing an understanding of what motivates ballet dancers may provide valuable insights into attraction and retention drivers per se.

#### **1.4 Nature and Aims of the Thesis**

The aim of the thesis is to explore the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice. The young people participating in the study are secondary school aged children and early career participants. For comparative purposes, two separate groups are studied. The first group is drawn from young people who are studying or working in the performing arts as dancers (or aspiring dancers). The second group is drawn from young people in 'mainstream' industry and in the early stages of their careers. To achieve this aim the study is divided into two phases: Phase One focuses on the career attraction motivators of secondary school-aged children aged 14 to 17 years; and Phase Two investigates the

early career experiences and retention motivators for young workers. Given the specialised nature of ballet as an employment sector, Phase Two also includes interviews with dancers who had retired following an active career in dance. These interviews with retired dancers serve to explore and validate work expectations and realities. Table 1.1 provides a visual map of study phases.

**Table 1.1 The Study Participants**

RESEARCH PHASE	COHORT	COHORT SECTOR	STUDY FOCUS
<b>One</b>	Young People aged 14-17 yrs	Full-time Secondary School Participants	Career Aspirations
		Full-time Professional Dance Training	Career Aspirations
<b>Two</b>	Young People aged 18-29 years	Early Career Mainstream Industry Participants	Early career experiences and retention drivers
		Early Career Dancers	Early career experiences and retention drivers
		Retired Dancers	Validation of ballet career experiences

The inclusion of ballet dancers in the study is particularly useful because they have limited employment choices. It is difficult for dancers to achieve their career aspirations or succeed in a long-term career due to an oversupply of career aspirants and skilled labour. This raises questions as to why they stay; what specific retention drivers are most important for this cohort; and how similar or dissimilar dancers are to other workers. Are there elements within the motivations of dancers that lead them to follow or stay with a career that are not present among other graduates, or are they just a more extreme case? Answers to these questions are explored in the findings of this study.

The aims of this thesis are:

- To identify and understand the motivational factors that influence career choice and the attraction and retention of young people under the age of 30; and

- To explore the key similarities and differences in career aspirations and work experiences between the two distinct cohorts of young people.

The results of this study can then be compared to the literature findings on commitment, attraction and retention across industry sectors. These aims lead to the research questions, which are presented in the following section.

## **1.5 PhD Research Questions**

The central research question is:

*“What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?”*

This question leads to three sub questions:

1. What are the career aspirations and drivers of career choice amongst two distinct cohorts of school-aged youth?
2. What are the work experiences and retention drivers of two distinct cohorts of early career workers?
3. What can the key similarities and differences between the two distinct cohorts of young people tell us about youth career aspirations and work experiences?

The answers to these questions will assist in articulating what it is that young people want from a career, the type of work they enjoy, and the characteristics of their work experiences that will lead to retention. The questions will also provide comparative data between the two cohorts.

## **1.6 Methodology**

The overall research design utilises a qualitative research methodology framed in a constructivist paradigm. The ontological position taken is a relativist one and this leads to the adoption of a subjectivist epistemology. Given that there were two distinct groups participating in the study, the young people pursuing ‘mainstream’

careers or those aspiring to a career in ballet, comparative and content analysis approaches were adopted.

There were two phases of data collection and these are outlined in Table 3.3. Phase One included focus group interviews with young people aged 14-17 years of age who were in full-time secondary education or enrolled in formal full-time dance training. Phase Two concentrated on obtaining data from early career participants in both mainstream industry and ballet through the use of individual face-to-face and email interviews; and also included interviews with retired ballet dancers. The retired dancers were able to speak to the initial findings from the dance cohort, bringing a representative voice to this under-researched area.

The primary source of data collection was through individual or structured focus group interviews. This was to encourage rich information, as recommended by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005). Because of their employment commitments and distribution across Australia, a number of the early career dancers were interviewed individually and/or via email, with follow up telephone conversations as necessary.

The focus groups were separated into four different cohorts:

1. Young people aged 14-17 years of age enrolled in full-time secondary schooling (completing Years 11 and 12 tertiary entrance studies).
2. Young people aged 14-17 years of age enrolled in full-time professional dance programs and who were completing their schooling via distance learning programs.
3. Early career (those working in their chosen field for less than five years) participants who had completed full-time secondary schooling and tertiary level training and/or education.
4. Early career dancers whose main source of income was from working as dancers, primarily with Australian dance companies. To cross-validate the dancers' responses, interviews were also sought with a group of dancers who had retired from their dancing careers.

### ***1.6.1 Ethics Approval***

As the participants in Phase One of the data collection stage were categorised as minors (under the age of 18), a working with children police check was obtained. The study was designed to comply with the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and in accordance with these guidelines obtained Ethics Approval (No. SOM-11-12).

## **1.7 Significance**

The aim of the research was to obtain a clearer understanding of the attraction and retention drivers for young people. The study seeks to draw conclusions on the nexus between career expectations and reality, as well as the retention drivers considered most significant for a young worker. These findings will make a major contribution to the academic literature on the attraction and retention drivers that link to commitment and retention. Australian organisations make significant time, labour and financial contributions to development and the research findings should have a critical influence on how these strategies are developed. The findings are also likely to have implications for the types of rewards and motivators that are promoted and implemented. The findings for the ballet sector are also likely to be substantial, with implications for the nature and extent of commitment, its foci and bases and their links to career attraction and retention.

There will also be significant application to the profit driven, commercial sectors in Australia, which continue to be faced with an escalating rate and cost of turnover. The resource-based organisations, for example, have found that generous financial incentives deliver short-term commitment and retention. Some initial studies into this sector have found that supervisor and organisational support and job design strategies have a significant impact upon intentions to stay or leave (Rowland 2004). This study will help identify if these are equally relevant to Generation Y and Z workers. This research should therefore provide more comprehensive evidence on the role of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

The study will also allow for testing of the veracity of some of the claims about generational differences and will provide a clearer understanding of the attraction and retention drivers that will assist organisations and policy makers to develop

strategies to align with these. There is the opportunity for further comparative and international research in this area, for all industry sectors and more particularly in countries where there is significant government financial support and interest in the performing arts.

## 1.8 Thesis Chapter Structure

The thesis is outlined in Table 1.2 as follows.

**Table 1.2 Thesis Chapter Structure**

CHAPTER NUMBER	CHAPTER TITLE	CHAPTER CONTENT
One	The Context for Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overview and justification</li> <li>▪ Theoretical framework</li> <li>▪ Specific cohort frameworks</li> <li>▪ Thesis chapter structure</li> <li>▪ Nature and aims of thesis</li> <li>▪ Research questions</li> <li>▪ Conceptual framework</li> <li>▪ Significance</li> </ul>
Two	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive analysis of the literature that exists in relation to the key features of the contextual framework</li> <li>▪ Conceptual framework from the literature</li> </ul>
Three	Research Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research purpose and design</li> <li>▪ Research paradigms</li> <li>▪ Research methodology</li> <li>▪ Data collection methods</li> <li>▪ Data analysis methods</li> <li>▪ Ethical and data management issues</li> </ul>
Four	Data Analysis and Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Findings and emergent themes</li> <li>▪ Comparative analysis between cohorts</li> <li>▪ Job Retention Checklist rankings and analysis</li> <li>▪ Conceptual framework</li> </ul>
Five	Discussion and Future Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Career attraction and retention discussion</li> <li>▪ New model for Foci of Commitment</li> <li>▪ Study limitations</li> <li>▪ Future research opportunities</li> <li>▪ Conclusions</li> </ul>

## 1.9 Concluding Comments

This chapter has presented an introduction to the research purpose, key research questions and an overview of the structure of the thesis. A brief overview of the

research methodology and the two phases of data collection were also provided. The setting for the study, along with a brief overview of the issues involving youth in attraction and retention and the significance of ballet as a legitimate industrial sector for analysis, were explored.

The focal point of the research is to explore the work attraction and retention drivers of young people who can be described as belonging to Generations Y and Z and who are about to, or have recently entered the workforce. The aims of the study are: to identify the career aspirations and drivers of career choice amongst two distinct cohorts of school aged youth: those enrolled in full-time secondary schooling and those enrolled in full-time professional dance programs and completing their secondary schooling via distance learning programs; to identify the work experiences and retention drivers of the two distinct cohorts of early career workers: graduates working in mainstream industry and ballet dancers whose main source of income was from working as dancers, primarily within Australian dance companies; and to explore the key similarities and differences in career aspirations and work experiences between the two distinct cohorts of young people. Clearly, commitment and satisfaction play a role, but the impact and importance of commitment to self or individual passions, the work, peers or the career, and how these link to retention outcomes, are the key themes that are also explored.

This chapter has introduced the notions of commitment and passion for career, and questions the links between intrinsic rewards in lieu of extrinsic rewards. The drivers of 'passion' are also raised. For example, is the commitment to dance explained by the nature of the work, the emphasis on skill development and enhancement, the intrinsic rewards gained from performing well, the physical and mental challenge, or a more intangible reason such as a physiological endorphin response from the dancing or a more psychological and emotional 'pull' to the career? To what extent do extrinsic rewards support and enhance retention in those who have a strong profession or career commitment?

The next chapter will provide an overview of the critical literature on career attraction and retention, with particular attention to generational differences in the workforce, the nature of careers and career choice, and the key elements of career attraction and retention in ballet. The chapter will also provide an overview of the



theoretical paradigms underpinning career satisfaction and commitment and the relationship of these to intentions to stay. Linkages to the thesis research questions and gaps in the literature will conclude the chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the literature that relates to the central research question, “*What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?*”

The chapter addresses what it is about the career attraction levers and drivers for young people that determine particular career choices, which may ultimately lead to work satisfaction and an intention to stay with their employer in the future. Considerable literature exists on career attraction and retention; for example (Rynes and Alison 1990; Rowland 2004; Carless and Wintle 2007; Eisenberger et al. 2002; Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003). However, this study differs by focusing on young people, often referred to as Generations Y and Z, as well as the career aspirations, and experiences of those in the dance sector. The available literature and research is more scant in these two areas. This literature review assists in building a logical framework for the research and sets it within a tradition of inquiry and demonstrates the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions (Marshall and Rossman 1999, 43).

The chapter first examines the nature of the attraction and retention levers and drivers for young people in the context of the key intrinsic and extrinsic motivators identified in the literature. Having first outlined the key aspects of career attraction and retention drivers (Section 2.1) and motivation (Section 2.2), the chapter explores intrinsic motivators for career attraction and retention are discussed within a framework of the Individual and identity, Relationships and the Characteristics of Work (Section 2.3). The nature of the relationship between the individual, an individual’s identity, and the motivators of career attraction and retention are linked to the constructs of identity construction, possible selves, career calling and the nature of the psychological contract. Possible self is not currently considered to be an element within the human resources framework; rather it is a psychological construct that explores how individuals think about their aspirations and goals and their own potential in the future (Markus and Nurius 1986). The psychological contract, whilst acknowledged as an extrinsic motivator for work retention, is also a

significant intrinsic driver for work retention within the context of early work and career promises and expectations. The key extrinsic career attraction and retention motivators explored in Section 2.4 are also framed within relationships, linking to the social identity and exchange frameworks. Characteristics of work, particularly the nature of work flexibility, work/life balance and career development are key human resource management functions that are also identified as critical intrinsic motivators for attraction and retention. These intrinsic and extrinsic motivators have an impact upon job satisfaction (Section 2.5) as well as the intensity and nature of organisational and commitment (Section 2.6). The critical literature in these areas, along with the findings on the foci and bases of commitment, is explored. Foci of commitment include commitment to the job, the supervisor, the team or group and the career and/or profession. The psychological constructs of self and passion (as discussed in Section 2.3) are also explored within the context of the foci and bases of commitment.

The established literature argues for a strong correlation between commitment and work satisfaction and retention, so this study also needs to consider this link, especially in terms of outcomes. There has been limited scholarly work conducted in the proposed field of inquiry, particularly the comparative nature of career aspirations and retention drivers amongst young people in divergent industry sectors. To provide a background to the demographic context of the study, the key attributes of Generations Y and Z are presented in Section 2.7. The issues that outline the nature of the dance (Section 2.8), and the nature and meaning of career (Section 2.9) are also discussed. Section 2.10 explores, because of their relevance of the study, the public and not-for-profit sectors of the employment market. This section includes a brief explanation of the economic and workforce characteristics of the dance sector, to provide an important insight into the unique nature of this industry. Issues related to realistic job previews and problems in congruence between career aspirations and expectations and the realities of work, are explored in Section 2.11. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the chapter structure.

**Table 2.1 Chapter Two Structure**

<b>2.1</b>	Career attraction and retention drivers
<b>2.2</b>	Motivation
<b>2.3</b>	Intrinsic retention drivers
<b>2.4</b>	Extrinsic retention drivers
<b>2.5</b>	Job satisfaction
<b>2.6</b>	Commitment
<b>2.7</b>	Generational impacts on the workforce
<b>2.8</b>	Ballet attraction and retention drivers
<b>2.9</b>	The nature and meaning of career
<b>2.10</b>	Career choice: Industry comparisons
<b>2.11</b>	Career fact and fiction: Congruence between career aspirations and work reality
<b>2.12</b>	Linkage to research questions
<b>2.13</b>	Literature framework
<b>2.14</b>	Conclusions

Many organisations, nationally and internationally, are focusing their attention on the attraction and retention of critical and often highly skilled human resources. As a result, there exists an abundance of academic literature on staff attraction and selection strategies and the associated extrinsic reward systems introduced to retain workers. Whilst a number of organisations have been able to attract and retain highly valued workers through a range of financial, career and status related incentives, these strategies are often short lived, particularly amongst the younger workers. The role of intrinsic rewards is now being ‘tested’ by a number of organisations to determine if they lead to successful, ‘long-term’ commitment and retention. The evidence discussed suggests a range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are included in these decisions, and these are also influenced by generational, social and economic factors, with significant implications for career attraction and retention.

## **2.1 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers**

Career attraction is an increasingly important consideration for the majority of young people in industrialised societies. The choice of career is considered in secondary schooling, with school subjects that are the basis of university or technical college

entry being selected by students at 13-14 years of age. With career considerations being identified at such a young age, employers need to develop sound and accurate attraction, induction and retention strategies reflective of the jobs and careers the applicants are seeking. Better targeting may also help as a predictor of superior performance. Applicants who share the objectives and values, or take pride in the profession traditions, are likely to exhibit personality traits of confidence, high self-esteem that support achievement and high levels of intrinsic motivation (Boshoff and Mels 2000, 269). The supply of available workers will determine the severity of an organisation's attraction problem and the type of attraction strategies employed (Rynes and Alison 1990). It is also clear that as educational and skill levels of potential applicants increases, the pressure increases for organisations to expand and improve upon the range of extrinsic and intrinsic benefits in order to meet the increased financial and career development expectations of this potential workforce.

The specific nature of career choice drivers, aspirations and career as a calling will be discussed later in this chapter. Whilst career attraction drivers play an important role in organisational sustainability, the factors which keep them there are even more important. Worker retention is one of the most challenging and difficult issues affecting today's organisations, and retention management has become a popular concept within human resource management literature (De Vos and Meganck 2009). The traditional contract between workers and employers was a relatively simple one; further, it was based on stable relationships and a stable economy. This model had its roots in the Middle Ages, where Lords swore loyalty to their king in exchange for his protection, and the serfs made the same commitment to their Lords (Dibble 1999, 40). These rules no longer apply. The industrial revolution started the breakdown in this relationship and lead to poor working conditions and the formation of unions (Dibble 1999). New competitive forces in the 1960s, particularly technology and globalisation, further changed the power bases between employers and workers (Dibble 1999).

In an era of global competitiveness and shortages of skilled labour the retention of staff is a critical issue (Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; Horwitz, Heng, and Quazi 2003; Rowland 2004). It is also vitally important that organisations lay a solid foundation for the employment relationship (Dibble 1999). However, even with the

plethora of existing studies on what drives commitment and satisfaction, and therefore their willingness to stay with an organisation, few employers have actually succeeded in doing this. This is demonstrated in the Boshoff and Mels (2000) study of 601 United States human resource managers, noted in Chapter One, where attempts to minimise turnover failed.

Regardless of the industry, the voluntary loss of highly skilled workers who hold organisation specific knowledge and expertise is detrimental to both performance and future planning (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006, 203). Carmeli and Weisburg also suggest it is obvious that highly satisfied and emotionally attached workers tend to display low turnover intentions, so organisations need to invest in practices that reinforce such emotional attachments and high levels of satisfaction. Organisational attachment is the result of a range of extrinsic and intrinsic drivers, some of which have been the focus of significant research and discussion in the literature. It is to this literature that the chapter turns next.

## **2.2 Motivation**

*“If one is primarily interested in performance and is not concerned with intrinsic motivation, then extrinsic reward systems, if properly administered, may be quite effective. But if one is concerned about long-term consequences, the answer may be different. For example, if one is concerned with children’s learning, he [sic] undoubtedly will want the children to enhance, rather than diminish, their intrinsic motivation, and this would seem more important than immediate performance on some task. The appropriate route here becomes the intrinsic one.”(Deci 1975, 208)*

It has become increasingly apparent in today’s organisations, where the costs of attaining and developing human capital are high and the ability to retain them increasingly difficult, that extrinsic rewards alone are not sufficient (Rowland 2004; Flowers and Hughes 1973). What has emerged from existing research and literature on the motivating potential of extrinsic rewards, particularly money, is that it is complicated, and money alone will not work for very long. Indeed, “*money alone*

*does not motivate young managers*” (Walsh and Taylor 2007, 164). Monetary rewards motivate quantitative performance in the short term, yet this becomes irrelevant in work today when workers at all levels are required to undertake complex, long term assignments (Dibble 1999). Workers judge the quality of their work on the intrinsic satisfaction gained and whether they feel their work environment is supportive (Thompson 2000). Whilst the study of intrinsic rewards is not new, organisations are becoming increasingly aware of their importance for career attraction and retention.

Hertzberg (1987) identified links between intrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation. The motivation factors that are intrinsic to work include recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility (autonomy) and growth or advancement (Armstrong and Brown 2006). If the work is to be intrinsically motivating it needs to provide opportunities for feedback, allow the workers to use their abilities, and allow for a high degree of self-control or autonomy over how they get the work done and the goals set to achieve this (Armstrong and Brown 2006). The literature since the 1980s has strongly supported the contention that intrinsic factors are a stronger predictor than extrinsic factors of behavioural intentions (Herzberg 1987).

Deci (1975) suggested that “*external rewards decrease intrinsic motivation and that to be intrinsically motivated is to perform an activity when an individual receives no apparent reward except the activity itself*” (p. 105). However, this is a particularly narrow definition of intrinsic motivation. Cameron and Pierce (2002, 38) cite an example from Ausubel (1948) to explain the essence of intrinsic motivation. There examples comes from a Jewish fable about an old man taunted by children, who offered them a dime for each time they called him “Jew”. The old man reduced the value of the payment over a period of days until by the end of the week the children refused to call him names for a penny. The fact they were still being rewarded for the act became insignificant. The point of the story was to demonstrate how extrinsic rewards ‘kill’ intrinsic rewards and how little appears to have been learned about rewarding staff.

Frey (1997) points out that the normal neoclassical paradigm for economic motivation is that incentives and rewards are rolled together. It is also a ‘given’ that

extrinsic rewards and incentives often form a significant component of the positive relationship to motivation but that monetary payments may ‘crowd out’ intrinsic motivation, thus acting as a disincentive. This certainly supports Deci’s theory of a negative relationship between external rewards and intrinsic motivation. Gandossy, Tucker et al. (2006) further support the notion of focusing on more than extrinsic rewards:

*“Employers need to spend less time trying to retain workers through shallow incentives like salary bumps and more time wooing them over to the job and the organisation by offering interesting challenges, greater latitude and stimulating learning opportunities.” (p. 103)*

This is not new! Cognitive evaluation theory proposes that intrinsic motivation springs from two innate sources: the need for competence and the need for self-determination, and that people strive to feel competent and free from external control (Cameron and Pierce 2002). However, Cameron and Pierce are critical of the theory, particularly its lack of specificity and the fact that not all behaviours are intrinsically motivated. Indeed, they suggest that many workers will perform for no apparent extrinsic reward, but are motivated by anticipated future benefits such as promotions and pay rises. Crewson (1997) argues that care also needs to be taken in how we reward intrinsically motivated performance and behaviours; offering monetary (extrinsic) rewards may actually reduce the continuation of high performance. Nonetheless, these findings do not fully explain performance, commitment and retention in professions such as the arts or community based and non-profit arenas where little financial reward is offered.

It is evident that workers commit to an organisation in return for certain rewards that, more often than not, are intrinsic in nature (Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed 2002). Research indicates that intrinsic factors such as learning opportunities and career development, instead of or alongside financial rewards, appear to be a critical determinant in the motivation and retention of workers in today’s knowledge-based society (Armstrong and Brown 2006). Studies into the role of volunteers who do the same work as workers indicate they are likely to work for the rewards of social interaction and service to others. Volunteers see their work as more praiseworthy



and are more satisfied and less likely to leave the organisations (Pearce 1983). There is evidence that younger workers are also intrinsically motivated, even early in their career; and work characteristics that are specifically intrinsic in nature are directly correlated to job satisfaction and commitment (Lubbers, Loughlin, and Zweig 2005, citing Saks 1995).

Even though intrinsic and extrinsic motivators result in different levels of satisfaction and motivation, the links between these motivators within the workplace and career attraction and retention are the same: they are the motivators that entice a potential worker to consider joining the organisation, and once there, motivate them to stay. Motivation is explored in more depth starting with intrinsic retention drivers.

### **2.3 Intrinsic Retention Drivers**

More recently, the focus of research has been on the role of intrinsic motivators and drivers, as these encourage workers to not only perform, but also to remain with the organisation. The design of the job, along with career progression and development, are vital to encourage potential candidates to available positions within an organisation and to encourage them to remain committed and stay. Emphasis has been on the role of the individual, and their own aspirations and expectations, in matching workers intrinsic values with those of the organisation. This is underpinned by social identity theory as outlined in Section 2.3.1. Within this, the psychological constructs of identity construction and possible selves are discussed, as is the role of the psychological contract in career retention. Whilst linkages between career identity and work commitment and retention are yet to be discussed in the current literature, within the lens of human resource management and organisational behaviour, they are important elements to be explored within the context of this study. Intrinsically motivated retention is also driven by relationships with others, a factor which also has extrinsic implications as outlined in Section 2.4.2, and the characteristics of the work performed, particularly opportunities for flexibility and work/life balance.

### ***2.3.1 The Individual and Identity***

The importance of meeting an individual's work and career aspirations and expectations is becoming increasingly important in the retention of costly and highly skilled human resources. Whilst the nature of the individual's attitudes, behaviours and expectations is posited within Social Identity Theory, the psychological constructs of identity construction and possible selves are also discussed within this context. Whilst identity is not traditionally a core element of HRM literature on careers, it is a crucial consideration in the context of the study.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) postulates that an individual's social identity is psychologically and internally based. This theory seeks to explain a range of work related attitudes and behaviours that result from an worker's identification with the organisation, which in turn result in organisational commitment, leading to reduced turnover (Van Dick 2005). The primary thrust of the theory is that people strive to establish or increase their self-esteem; that an individual's social identity is based on group memberships; and that whilst group membership is important, individuals will aim to maintain their own identity by differentiating themselves from the group (Van Dick 2005, citing Tajfel & Turner, 1986, 174; Hogg and Terry 2000; Tajfel 1974).

A social identity framework was first posited by Tajfel in the 1970s to explain the emotional significance of group membership, intergroup conflicts and discrimination (Van Dick 2005, 173). Nevertheless, it took another decade for social identity to find its place within the organisational behaviour framework.

A broader approach to this framework is Self Categorisation Theory (SCT), which explains how an individual's self-definition impacts upon group membership and behaviour (Van Dick 2005). The critical elements of both the Social Identity and Self Categorisation theories are the way in which they predict that the more an individual aligns him or herself with an organisational group, the greater the individual's performance, job satisfaction, motivation and wellbeing will be (Van Dick 2005).

Whilst these constructs provide a useful framework for examining how individuals identify with an organisation, which in turn impacts upon their satisfaction and

possible intentions to stay, there is a gap in the application to commitment. In this setting, commitment is described as a willingness to persist in a course of action (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran 2005). Logically, feelings of attachment, identification or loyalty to an organisation also directly influence retention (Zettler, Friedrich, and Hilbig 2011). The literature has so far not explored the link between social identity, commitment, attraction and retention and the concepts of identity construction, possible selves (aspirations), career calling, the psychological contract. These concepts will be discussed in turn in the following paragraphs.

Identity construction is a critical developmental dimension in children and adolescents, and is a process in which young people engage across different times and settings (Stokes and Wyn 2007). Fundamentally informed by self-understanding and social interaction, it requires the acceptance of significant others, social groups and community (Bennett 2011). It is also clear that adolescents, as part of their cognitive development, will hypothesise about the future and plan courses of action to either realise or avoid elements of those potential futures (Freer 2009). The concept of possible self was developed by Markus and Nurius (1986) to reflect the importance of self-knowledge in how individuals think about their own potential and their future – the ideal selves they want to become. Indeed, what is possible to achieve is derived directly from individual goals, aspirations, motives, fears, threats, and linkages to achievement of self (aspirations) and motivation. The construction of identity is important in the development and realisation of a possible self. This directly affects an individual's career aspiration and career choice as well as the type of organisation these young people are attracted to and their willingness to stay.

Hock et al (2006) developed a Possible Selves Program to provide a framework for adolescents to identify potential possible selves and to develop related strategies (Freer 2009). The six stages in the framework are discovering, thinking, sketching, reflecting, growing and performing (Freer 2009, citing Hock et al 2006). Freer (2009) adapted the program into two phases for music students: Conceptualisation and Realisation, with the stages of discovering, thinking and imagining forming part of the first phase; and reflecting, growing and performing the second phase (p. 4). The career choices and aspirations of young people are developed through the stages in the conceptualisation phase of the possible selves framework (Freer 2009), and

this has application not just to young music students, but to young people generally. To extend this, the thesis assesses the realisation stage of the program with students and early career workers in both mainstream industry and ballet.

The exploration of self and possible selves – in terms of career – is critical amongst young people on the cusp of entering further education and/or the workforce (Freer 2009, 341), but there is also the possibility that this exploration continues through one’s entire working life. If this is the case, then environmental influences including social factors are critical in determining ongoing work motivation and career decisions. The strength and nature of possible selves in terms of career choice and aspirations of young people, and the impact of social interactions on career choices as well as intentions to stay once in the workforce, all warrant further exploration. Thus, the current study explores the links between the desire to achieve possible self-aspirations and career as a calling.

Descriptions of work as a calling date to the age when monks described their work as being ‘called to monastic life’ (Hunter, Dik, and Banning 2010, 179). During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, theologians and scholars from various traditions examined the notion of a calling in the context of a range of occupations with spiritual significance (Duffy, Dik, and Steger 2011, 210). In a more contemporary context, literature on work as a calling is limited but growing, particularly in the areas of vocational psychology. Through this work, its links to work engagement, satisfaction and reduced turnover are gradually being validated (Bunderson and Thompson 2009; Duffy and Sedlacek 2010; Peterson et al. 2009). However, the majority of these studies are limited to adults and do not include youth.

The differentiation between a job, a career and a “calling” is articulated in the work of Wrzesniewski et al:

*“People who have jobs are only interested in the material benefits from work and do not seek or receive any other type of reward from it. In contrast, people who have careers have a deeper personal investment in their work and mark their achievement not only through monetary gain, but through advancement within the occupational structure. Finally,*

*people with callings find that their work is inseparable from their life. A person with a calling works not for financial gain or career advancement, but instead for the fulfilment that doing the work brings to the individual.” (1997, 22).*

This suggests that a career calling has a deeper, psychological meaning associated with it and there is a strong emotional attachment to the choice that may not be rationally explained, but is driven merely by the feelings associated with the choice. The quote also infers a rather simplistic differentiation between work, career and calling. The study will explore whether there exists a far more complex relationship.

An understanding of the concept and research into career calling can offer fresh insights into career choice and career making decisions (Elangovan, Pinder, and McLean 2010). Current research suggests that individuals who view their career as a calling are more likely to be satisfied with their work, committed to their organisation, and less likely to want to withdraw (Duffy, Dik, and Steger 2011, 216). However, high expectations of a career to which a worker believes they have been “called” may in fact leave them vulnerable to disillusionment (Duffy, Dik, and Steger 2011; Elangovan, Pinder, and McLean 2010), which has implications for the psychological contract that underpins work expectations, commitment and satisfaction.

The role and importance of commitment in the performance and retention of staff was raised earlier in this chapter. However, the links between commitment and reward systems is also a central tenet of human resource management, since it offers the possibility of something more in the employment relationship than the simple wage-effort bargain (Walton 1985 cited by Druker and White 2000). One of the ways in which organisations have been attempting to increase worker commitment is through ‘new pay’ approaches, which focus on the person rather than pay for the work performed. Another is through building a positive psychological contract, this is the unspoken assumptions of the worker and the employer in the employment relationship (Druker and White 2000). Whilst the psychological contract has extrinsic traits reflecting contractual obligations between employer and employee, it also embodies the implicit expectations of both the organisation and the individual

and is a powerful device for developing a sense of loyalty; it ‘hooks people in’ to an organisation (Adamson, Doherty, and Viney 1998, 252).

Increasingly, particularly with skilled workers, the psychological contract includes expectations and assumptions about the rewards systems, conditions of work, job security, cultural expectations within the organisation and/or work team, and, as such, impacts on social behaviour at work (De Hauw and De Vos 2010; Makin, Cooper, and Cox 1996; Hess and Jepsen 2009). The psychological contract is even more important when examining worker expectations regarding the intrinsic rewards they will gain. Expectations of these rewards are often unwritten and may far exceed what the employer is prepared, or able, to provide.

The longer workers remain with an organisation, the broader the psychological contract becomes, reflecting the changing nature of the relationship with the employer (Hess and Jepsen 2009; Makin, Cooper, and Cox 1996). If the terms of the psychological contract are broken, trust and job satisfaction are lowered and it is likely that the worker will leave the organisation (Makin, Cooper, and Cox 1996). There is also some evidence that that nature of the psychological contract is changing, as is society in general. The new psychological contract has a shifting focus toward career management of the individual and the organisation’s role is to provide workers with opportunities for growth and development (Hess and Jepsen 2009, 263).

Even with the abundance of recent literature on satisfaction and retention, there remains a lack of congruence between what workers really want from a workplace and what employers think they want (De Vos and Meganck 2009; De Vos, De Stobbeleir, and Meganck 2009; De Hauw and De Vos 2010; Cassar and Briner 2011; Rowland 2004). This is problematic because one of the major features of a psychological contract is the individual’s belief that the agreement is a mutual one (McDermott, Mangan, and O’Connor 2006). Dries, Pepermans et al (2008) cite the Cangemini and Guttschalk (1986) United States study of 35,000 professional workers, from which a key finding was the inconsistency between worker and employer views on what workers want from the workplace and their jobs. The 35,000 workers indicated they most valued an appreciation of their work, being

involved, and receiving personal treatment, which differed substantially from the monetary rewards supervisors thought they wanted. Psychological contracts clearly play an important role in the retention of staff. However, in addition to the nature and impacts of the psychological contract, we need also to consider the nature of social relationships at work, the design of the job, career development opportunities, and identity and self, all of which have a significant impact on career attraction and retention.

### **2.3.2 Relationships**

Whilst workplace relationships have been found to be important intrinsic retention drivers, the literature findings also demonstrate an overlap between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drivers for social exchange and relationships in an organisation.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) has been a significant and influential framework – particularly in the field of organisational behaviour – since the 1920s (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005). The theory proposes that human beings participate in a range of interactions that generate obligations, and that these are interdependent and contingent on the actions of others, and can result in high quality relationships (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005, 874). This is particularly relevant to this study as the nature of social relationships, on a one-to-one basis as well as with peer groups and within teams, has an impact upon the motivation and retention of people within the work environment. These relationships, which evolve when workers are cared for, result in effective work behaviour and positive worker attitudes (Cropanzano and Mitchell 2005, 10). Although the nature of social relationships, particularly with mentors and supervisors, has extrinsic motivational implications, the building of relationships also has significant intrinsic motivational implications for the behaviour of people in the workplace.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) outline the five existing constructs that lead to the operationalisation of Social Exchange Theory: perceived organisational support; commitment; team support; supervisory support; and trust. However, they suggest, “*the existing theory is ambiguous and lacks integration, and recommend further investigation to uncover other constructs*” (p. 875). Teraji (2009) suggests that

perception of self can be considered a product of social interaction, as people compare themselves to others to evaluate their own abilities and skills. This aligns with the possible self construct discussed in Section 2.3.1, which reflects how an individual views his or her own potential in the future. Whilst the construction of identity and possible selves is often well developed prior to the individual entering the workforce, the nature and extent of social exchange in the organisation may also impact upon the ongoing formation of self and career identity. Social exchange is also influenced by the design of the job and the nature of the social interactions that exist as part of the work role. In addition, the design and development of roles and career is important for workers who want to keep learning and developing skills, hence there is a valid link to ongoing career development.

### ***2.3.3 Characteristics of Work***

The design of work to meet the needs of both the worker and the organisation is another critical issue for employers operating in a global environment, and whilst much literature points to the impact of the way in which work is structured on extrinsic retention drivers, there is also a strong linkage to the more intrinsically motivated drivers of satisfaction, commitment and retention. With the increase in educational standards and focus on knowledge-based work, workers are demanding more interesting work with greater opportunities for skill enhancement and promotional opportunities, and employers have increased expectations relating to work flexibility and productivity (Nankervis et al. 2011). Studies also indicate that younger workers place significantly more emphasis than previous generations on intrinsic work factors such as challenging and exciting work, and less prominence on the prestige of the profession (McCabe, Nowak and Mullen, 2005). In addition, the increasingly problematic supply and demand of highly skilled labour means employers are under greater pressure to cater to the needs of new, younger workers. These workers bring with them increasing demands for career development and flexibility in the conditions of work, including opportunities to achieve work-life balance as discussed below.

Dries, Pepermans et al. (2008) cite Finegold and Mohrman's 2001 study of 4,500 knowledge workers and managers from eight countries, who reported that work-life balance was considered the most important of all aspects of a career. Australian



research also supports an increased desire and quest for a balance between work and private life (Duxbury and Higgins 2008; Carless and Wintle 2007). The ability of a company to cater for this will have significant implications for retaining and recruiting the Generation Y cohort (Duxbury and Higgins 2008). Carless and Wintle (2007), in their study of final year undergraduate and postgraduate students at an Australian University, found young job seekers to be more attracted to work opportunities offering flexible career paths than those with a traditional path. The study findings also suggested that flexible HR policies “*increased applicants’ perceptions of organisational attraction during the initial stages of the recruitment process*” (p. 396).

Current thinking and research on the progress of a career is that there has been a fundamental shift from intra-company hierarchical advancement to inter-company self-development (Parker and Inkson 1999). The emphasis has moved to a more merit based career development mentality in which the skills of an extremely talented – and highly mobile – workforce need to be nurtured in order to not only develop workers for progressive roles within the company, but also to retain them. This means a fundamental shift in the way in which human resource strategies and policies are developed and implemented in relation to learning, development and career progression.

There needs to be an understanding that workers no longer believe (perhaps never have) that they are merely a resource for the achievement of organisational goals, but that they are autonomous actors striving to reach personal goals (Parker and Inkson 1999). Career development strategies are not only about what the organisation wants – they are about what the individual wants. This means they need to achieve some level of congruence between individual and organisational goals and needs.

The findings of a recent Hudson 20:20 Series report (2009) also indicates that Generation Y is the least willing cohort to accept compromises and a reduction (even during periods of economic downturn) to ongoing professional development and training, even when this aligns with keeping their own or their colleagues’ jobs. Hudson (2009) also found that opportunities for career progression are more likely to attract and retain talent than payment of high salaries. Indeed, 63% of Generation

Y's surveyed rated career development considerations as the trigger for seeking new employment (Hudson 2009). The report also found that the role of mentors and supervisors had additional implications for job satisfaction, commitment and retention.

## **2.4 Extrinsic Retention Drivers**

As with the intrinsic retention drivers outlined in Section 2.3, the literature also covers a number of extrinsic retention drivers that are underpinned by the needs of the individual and identity and relationships with others. Financial rewards have been the most commonly used medium to encourage performance, commitment and retention, and these rewards reflect the relationship between the individual and values they place on the work they perform. Relationships with others, as explained in the social exchange framework discussed in Section 2.3.2, also focus on relationships with a range of work colleagues including the supervisor and the peer group or team. Although these relationships are generally discussed as extrinsic motivators, it is acknowledged that these also feed into intrinsic needs and motivators.

### ***2.4.1 The Individual and Financial Rewards***

The management and payment of worker rewards have traditionally been extrinsically driven and motivated by being linked to performance such as those found in the form of financial rewards, such as pay increases and bonuses. However, past research acknowledges that an organisational reward system based solely on money as a motivator is not likely to lead to an optimum utilisation of human resources, as most individuals have a multi-faceted need structure (Reif 1975). Certainly, organisations have invested heavily in implementing pay-for-performance strategies, pay-based incentive programs, benefit plans and pay benchmarking, and other popular financial reward programs; but few of these strategies are supported by sound research evidence of increased satisfaction, commitment and retention (Brown 2008). The correlation between extrinsic rewards and increased retention requires further research and analysis.

### **2.4.2 Relationships**

As outlined in Section 2.3.2 the social exchange framework outlines the importance of relationships with others as a motivator for satisfaction, commitment and retention. Supervisors, peers and team members also act as an extrinsic motivator in terms of a worker's decision to remain in the job.

#### **The Role of the Supervisor**

The impact of the supervisor on staff retention has received more attention in recent years. In particular, Generation Y as a discreet cohort identify mentors (often a supervisor) as people who play a strong role in decisions to stay or leave an organisation (Sheahan 2005; Martin 2000; Eisner 2005; Solnet and Kralj 2010; Kelan and Lehnert 2009; Terjesen, Vinnicombe, and Freeman 2007; Martin 2005; Eisenberger et al. 2002).

Eisenberger, Stinglhamber et al. (2002) found evidence to suggest that workers who believe their supervisor values their contributions and cares about their well-being, perceived increased organisational support; and that this related to decreased turnover. However, this link between perceived organisational support and decreased turnover is only one of an extensive variety of variables (as cited in organisational support theory) that influence staff retention. Other relationships that affect intentions to stay include the peer group, colleagues or team.

#### **Impact of the Peer Group/Team**

In an era where self-managed work teams (SMWTs) and work undertaken on a team project basis is becoming the norm rather the exception, the impact of the peer group on commitment and retention is worthy of further discussion. The team or work group is one of the key foci of commitment (in the organisational commitment framework) that have become a research target in the fields of organisational behaviour, management and human resource management in recent years. It is, however, an area which remains insufficiently investigated (Pascal 2009).

In an organisational environment that places a greater emphasis on team outcomes, individual effort and performance benefit every member of the team. It follows that when individual workers reap the benefits of highly performing team members and

also experience a satisfying social relationship with them, their alignment with team goals and values and therefore, commitment to the team and the organisation, is enhanced (Bishop and Scott 2000). Performing artists, for example, are often members of artistic teams and are mutually dependent on one another for an effective performance. The ability to operate and function within a social context and teamwork is a prime requirement (Kogan 2002).

## **2.5 Job Satisfaction**

Early research conducted during the 1970s suggests that job satisfaction is linked to workers' values and what the organisation offers, which reflects the basis of the expectancy theories of motivation (Koch and Steers 1978b; Porter et al. 1974; Stone and Porter 1975). Earlier than this, Vroom's (1964) work on motivation highlighted the complexity involved in measuring and discussing job satisfaction because of the differences individuals demonstrated in their motives, values and abilities, work roles and work environment. The outcome of Vroom's research has been a general picture of a 'satisfying work role'. The work role most conducive to job satisfaction appears to be one that provides high pay, substantial promotional opportunities, considerate and participative supervision, an opportunity to interact with one's peers, varied duties, and a high degree of autonomy over work methods and work space; but not necessarily in this order.

Job satisfaction is an important factor in worker retention (Howell et al. 1968; Hom, Katerberg, and Hulin 1979; Herzberg 1987; Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003; Koch and Steers 1978b; Blau and Boal 1987). However, there is still much to be explored with regard to job satisfaction and the variance that occurs amongst workers about what promotes and maintains job satisfaction (as Vroom identified in his early work). In fact, it is highly unlikely that one conceptual model will explain all the factors.

The experiences and skills of individuals, and their psychological make-up, have a significant impact upon levels of work satisfaction, the choice of occupation, and performance. How does one really know if a worker is satisfied with the work performed? Does apparent, overt 'happiness' signify satisfaction, and does

satisfaction signify retention and performance? O'Malley (2000) agrees that these critical questions are in need of attention, posing this and other questions:

*“Many times we don't even know the answers because employees are seldom asked about what truly excites them and it is assumed that performance is an index of their pleasure. As long as the employee is doing well, we suppose they must be wonderfully happy also. High achievers, however, will perform well whether they like it or not. They just won't do it for very long before seeking out other job opportunities. For employees to reach the highest levels of job satisfaction, they need to be matched to jobs that allow expression of their passions. This implies taking care during the selection process so that employees who are hired are placed in jobs for which they are psychologically suited and also implies that crafting jobs and structuring developmental progressions to take maximum advantage of employees' natural inclinations.” (p. 161)*

There are also questions regarding the linkages between worker satisfaction and organisational commitment, with some scholars arguing that job satisfaction is a less stable construct than commitment (Bateman and Strasser 1984; Locke and Latham 1990; Wasti 2003; Solnet and Kralj 2010; McDermott, Mangan, and O'Connor 2006; Porter et al. 1974; Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, and Marshall 2006). Further, there are suggestions that commitment to an organisation may be a cause rather than a result, of job satisfaction (Bateman and Strasser 1984). Indeed, Bateman and Strasser conclude, from their longitudinal study of 129 nursing department workers in the United States, that interventions by the organisation such as improving the work performed or taking action to reduce work related tension, may result in higher work satisfaction, but not commitment. Given the considerable research into the area of worker satisfaction, it is clear that there is little evidence of application to the workforce, as only half of Australian knowledge workers are satisfied with the work they perform; a significant number feel dissatisfied with workloads, career development and pay; and one in four think of leaving their current employer (Duxbury and Higgins 2008, 13). Clearly, further analysis of the antecedents of job satisfaction and commitment is merited, particularly within the current and emerging frame of work itself.

## 2.6 Commitment

Commitment has served as a major construct of research for investigating the ties that bind someone to a particular occupation in an organisation and it has provided a useful frame of reference for understanding human behaviour for both individuals and organisations (van Vuuren et al. 2008). Commitment is defined as a willingness to persist in a course of action (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran 2005, 241) due to feelings of attachment, identification or loyalty (Zettler, Friedrich, and Hilbig 2011, 20, citing Cohen 2003 & Morrow 2003). Early models of retention propose that workers stay because of one of three key forms of commitment (Allen and Meyer 1993, 1996; Meyer and Allen 1997):

- a) Affective Commitment: a desire to remain,
- b) Continuance Commitment: the recognition that the costs associated with leaving would be high, and
- c) Normative Commitment: feelings of obligation to remain.

Ongoing interest in the arena of commitment research is clearly demonstrated by the work undertaken in both organisational and worker commitment.

Organisational commitment can be defined as a psychological link between the worker and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the worker will voluntarily leave the organisation (Allen and Meyer 1996, 252). As outlined earlier, research over the past fifteen years has predominantly focused on the three different types of organisational commitment: affective, continuance and normative. Considerable evidence across a wide variety of samples and performance indicators suggests that workers with strong affective commitment to the organisation will be more valuable than workers with weak commitment (Meyer and Allen 1997). Weak commitment is more likely to be associated with continuance commitment, where individuals stay for lack of choice and only do what is needed to maintain their position. It has also been argued that continuance commitment is not really a form of commitment as there is no psychological bond involved (van Vuuren et al. 2008, 49). Nonetheless, it has particular relevance in sectors such as dance, where the number of skilled workers far outweighs the number of company positions; and where the

attainment of a company position is so strongly aligned with esteem and notions of 'success'.

Affective commitment is the most critical form of commitment required, as high performing workers are the key to organisational success. Affective commitment to the organisation is generally positioned as an emotional attachment. What appears missing in even the most recent literature is the impact of achieving possible self-aspirations. Self is a strong emotional state, and achievement of self, work and/or career aspirations and expectations could lead to increased organisational commitment. Given the challenging employment market currently faced by organisations globally, the existing organisational commitment framework is in need of re-examination and possible re-framing.

Worker commitment has been comprehensively researched and has been shown to be a strong predictor of retention (Hom, Katerberg, and Hulin 1979; McDermott, Mangan, and O'Connor 2006; Boshoff and Mels 2000; Chew and Wong 2008; Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982; Steers 1977). Commitment continues to be a critical element for success in the organisations of today (Tsoumbris and Xenikou 2010; Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010; Zettler, Friedrich, and Hilbig 2011; Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011). This study will further pursue the links with intentions to stay, on the basis that the more recent literature suggests that commitment is a psychological statement aligned to intrinsic values rather than to extrinsic ones (Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; De Vos, De Stobbeleir, and Meganck 2009; De Vos and Meganck 2009; De Hauw and De Vos 2010; Cassar and Briner 2011; Crumpacker and Crumpacker 2007; Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010).

In light of the changing nature of work, particularly the increasing utilisation of short-term contracts, casual, part time and sub contracted labour, is the concept of 'commitment' an outmoded value? There is a body of concern regarding the causes and cures for reduced commitment and increased turnover and absenteeism (Boshoff and Mels 2000; Chew and Wong 2008; Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982; Blau and Boal 1987; Sturges and Guest 2001; Carmeli and Weisberg 2006). Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that workers do not become too attached to their employer, but instead protect themselves and ensure they remain employable in the event of a

layoff. This notion appears to confuse the concepts of skill and competency acquisition with a desire to be committed to one's current employer. Meyer and Allen tend to contradict their position by suggesting: "*As organisations become smaller and jobs become more flexible, those who remain in the organisation become even more important. Once the 'fat' has gone, the remaining employees represent the 'heart, brain and muscle' of the organization*" (p. 5). Ironically, this means that workers can become increasingly responsible for a broader portfolio of work and need, therefore, to look after themselves and develop new skill sets regularly. It is logical to assume that this also means they become more valued by the employer.

Meyer and Allen (1997) recognise the importance of the relationship between labour retention and commitment, as workers who are central to organisational success are also often highly skilled, usually as a result of a significant time and financial commitment on the part of the employer. A great deal of work in the field, particularly in examining the impacts of affective commitment, has been based on the Porter, Steers, et al. (1974) *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ). The questionnaire uses fifteen items to measure the degree to which subjects feel committed to the employing organisation and results from its use have demonstrated that workers who are affectively committed to the organisation tend to perform at a higher level than those who are not (Meyer et al. 1989). From their research, Meyer, Paunonen et al. (1989) recommend companies foster affective commitment, on the basis that workers who are intrinsically motivated to value their association with the organisation are more likely not only to remain with the company but to work toward its success. This is a critical point, particularly in light of the increasing costs of labour in today's competitive environment, and this early work is strongly supported by the findings of more recent research (Knippenberg and Sleebos 2006; Carmeli and Weisberg 2006; Cassar and Briner 2011; Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010; Cohen 2007).

### ***2.6.1 Foci and Bases of Commitment***

There is ample research available on work satisfaction and commitment (Locke and Latham 1990; Locke, Latham, and Erez 1988; Duffy, Dik, and Steger 2011; Becker 1992; Porter et al. 1974; Johnson and Chang 2008) and some of this includes the constructs for the foci and bases of commitment (Becker et al. 1996; Becker 1992;



Becker and Billings 1993; Tsoumbri and Xenikou 2010; Stinglhamber, Bentein, and Vandenberghe 2002). This study also seeks to examine areas not previously explored, in particular the frameworks of identity, possible selves and career calling. Other forms of commitment foci include the relationships between realistic job previews and the work performed, workers, supervisors and the work group, other intrinsic rewards, and met or unmet expectations, all of which are likely to affect retention within the organisation

Based on the seminal research outlined earlier, researchers have begun to view commitment, which is the perceived psychological bond that workers have with the work they perform (Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010, 227), as having multiple foci and bases (Becker and Billings 1993; Randall 1990; Becker 1992; Becker et al. 1996; Boshoff and Mels 2000; Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed 2002; Swailes 2002; Tsoumbri and Xenikou 2010; Gregersen 1993). The foci of commitment are the groups or individuals to whom a worker is attached (Becker et al. 1996, 465, citing Reichers 1985) and the bases of commitment are the motives engendering attachment (Becker et al. 1996, 465). The foci of commitment include organisations, professions/career, unions, management, supervisors, team/co-workers and customers; and the bases (motives) include compliance, identification, internalisation, attitudes and behaviours (Becker and Billings 1993; Becker et al. 1996). Distinctions between these numerous foci and bases have been found to account for variations in work satisfaction and intent to quit (Becker and Billings 1993, 178). This suggests that workers' commitment to the workplace is complex and too varied to be adequately explained by commitment to the organisation alone (Lee and Olshfski 2002 citing Reichers 1985).

Workers have multiple memberships depending on their placement within the structure of the organisation (Boshoff and Mels 2000). Becker et al. (1996) found that workers actually distinguished between commitment to supervisors and commitment to the organisation, validating a multidimensional view of commitment.

### **Job Commitment**

Commitment to the job is readily demonstrated in Lee and Olshfski's (2002) study of fire-fighters working in the aftermath of the September 11 2001 bombing of the

World Trade Centre. The conclusions drawn were that these individuals were appointed to jobs; they then identified with the role attached to that job; they became committed to doing the work; and they behaved according to the expectations attached to the job (Lee and Olshfski 2002). These fire-fighters committed to an identity that required heroic behaviour and they acted altruistically because this was expected of them, thus the specific foci of commitment related to the job (Lee and Olshfski 2002). This example demonstrates the interrelationship between the foci and bases of commitment. The commitment to the job was, in this case, separated from commitment to management, peers, customers and the broader career or profession.

### **Career/Profession Commitment**

Blau (1989) defined the broader career or profession as additional foci of commitment to the predominantly three foci mode, which reflects the primary focus on the organisation, roles and relationships. Studies have found that occupational commitment leads to greater worker satisfaction and commitment to the organisation (Witt 1993; Duffy, Dik, and Steger 2011; Chang 1999). Witt's (1993) study of 125 employees across two major military centres in the United States found that where workers had carefully selected their job and organisation, they were more concerned with long-term commitment rather than short-term tenure. In contrast, while the notion that workers have a commitment to their specialised occupation or profession has been considered intuitively appealing, there have been concerns with the operationalisation of such a construct; for example, if one has no 'profession' as such, does this mean that there is no commitment to their occupation? (Witt 1993).

This concern about commitment was also identified by Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed (2002) in a study of 96 employees and managers in a British government (Health Care Trust) organisation. The study used the four foci of commitment model (commitment to the service sector, organisation, work group and occupation) to assess how the foci are influenced by, and influence, attitudes and emotions at work, and found support for the concept of multiple commitments. They also found a high correlation between career/profession commitment and colleague support. In another example, Boshoff and Mels (2000) identified career commitment as a foci, but suggested that it should be distinguished from commitment to a profession, which is

viewed more as a commitment to the professional group/people rather than to the actual career. These examples show more research is needed in this area.

Commitment differences also arise for employment sectors as well as occupations; for example, the not-for-profit and voluntary sectors rely heavily on the satisfaction and affective commitment of workers as, due to budget limitations, they offer lower financial incentives than their private and public counterparts (Swales 2002). This relates also to work in a ballet company, where these workers follow a passion and career calling in their employment as dancers, and where absenteeism and voluntary turnover is low, irrespective of the long hours worked, working conditions and low pay (Alter 1997; Potter 1997; Abra 1987; Throsby and Hollister 2003).

### **Team Commitment**

Attachment and affective commitment to the workgroup or team is stronger than to the larger organisation (Riketta and Dick 2005). This is likely to be due to the closer relationships within the workgroup as well as greater access to control of work within a smaller group (Riketta and Dick 2005, 504). Individual workers who reap the benefits of highly performing team members and experience a satisfying social relationship with them, align with the team goals and values and, therefore, commitment to the team and the organisation are enhanced (Bishop and Scott 2000). Although the links between these multiple foci reportedly increase affective commitment (emotional attachment), and thus increased satisfaction and retention, the influence of the self (one's goals, values, and aspirations) is considerably under-researched within the foci of commitment framework. This is a critical consideration in the current study.

### **Self/Passion Commitment**

The impact of individual differences in motivation on organisational commitment is considerable and needs to be considered further. Johnson, Chang et al. (2010) suggest: "*Beyond demographics, few studies have examined other individual differences that potentially impact commitment.*" (p. 226). Certainly, the concept of self is a strong emotional state, and achievement of aspirations and expectations for self, the work performed or career could lead to improved organisational

commitment, and increased intentions to stay. In order to understand this, it is necessary to explore self-identity in more detail.

Self-identity can be understood in terms of three constructs: collective, relational and individual. Individual identity reflects: *“self-definitions based on personal uniqueness, and behaviours are motivated by personal goals and welfare. Self-worth is contingent on personal success.”* (Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010, 228). However, the concept of the individual tends to focus on unique traits and a heightened sense of benchmarking with others. What appears to be missing is the focus on identity construction and possible selves in terms of a career calling or passion, and the impacts of that upon work commitment. Indeed, Johnson, Chang and Yang (2010) propose a correlation between an individual’s self-identity and continuous, rather than affective commitment, noting also that this commitment is contingent upon the individual’s inability to find alternative employment. This correlation is promising, but limited, as it does not take into account the self and construction of identity based upon career achievement and the passion people might feel for that career, irrespective of the organisational norms.

Recent discussion concerning multiple foci of commitment does not necessarily refute earlier more linear studies, but it adds value to the existing literature. Growing evidence supporting the depth and complexities of commitment by workers may in fact assist in unravelling the nature of human behaviour and the linkages to retention, performance and motivation. Indeed, it may even improve understanding of the complexity of cause and effect in work attitudes and behaviours (Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed 2002, 340). Swailes (2002) suggests that it is a “black box” which requires fresh fieldwork to unravel the nature of commitment. The reality is that people have shifting profiles of commitment toward several foci and there is a need to measure the reasons for commitment, rather than commitment itself. This is something that appears to have been neglected to date. Further research is required into the specific foci of commitment and their impacts on performance, commitment, motivation and intentions to stay. This is essential to organisational survival in the context of increasing skill, costs, mobility and competition, particularly in the public and non-profit sectors, which are already finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the private sector.

The study of worker commitment will continue to develop and evolve, as there remains significant conflict between research findings as well as gaps in the literature relating to career and self-foci of commitment and the correlation of these with retention. The specific foci of commitment and the relationship to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to perform and to stay with an organisation are vital areas of study in a volatile global economy where the attraction and retention of skilled and talented labour will be paramount. This is particularly so for the young and emerging workforce. The impact of the key functional human resource processes on commitment to the job and the organisation, as well as intent to quit, also deserves further investigation and analysis in order to ensure they remain relevant and effective to a changing workforce.

Attraction and retention of staff are critical issues globally, and, as stated earlier, younger peoples' participation in work is important for Australia. The pressure of decreased youth participation rates in the workforce (The 2010 Intergenerational Report 2010), along with the current global employment environment characterised by a limited supply of skilled workers, are critical issues. It is important that organisations understand the influence and work preferences of different generations to be effective in the future (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008).

## **2.7 Generational Impacts on the Workforce**

A generation is defined as a group which shares the same birth years and significant life events (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008, citing Westerman and Yamamara 2007) and has previously been explained, in more detail, in Chapter One. The term 'generations' is used constantly, and yet the significance of generational groupings has been paid scant attention. Mannheim's 1923 essay 'The Problem of Generations' "has often been described as the seminal theoretical treatment of generations as a sociological phenomenon" (Pilcher, 1994, 481); yet much debate still surrounds the use and significance of term in relation to sociology, HRM, management, organisational behaviour and vocational psychology. There is, however, some existing literature regarding the impact of generational differences in attitudes to work and careers (for example, see Smola and Sutton 2002; Solnet and Kralj 2010; Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley 2010; Twenge 2010; Crumpacker and Crumpacker

2007). The views, value systems and expectations of young people have implications for future educational and career choices, the way in which work is structured and undertaken, and the drivers of performance and job retention, irrespective of the industry sector within which they will work (Smola and Sutton 2002; Martin 2005; Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons 2010; Levenson 2010; Shaw and Fairhurst 2008). Work and career expectations from a more highly educated, young workforce may also have other influences. Age diversity is at the top of the agenda for many human resource professionals, and responding to generational change is a crucial issue for attracting and retaining what is now generally referred to as the ‘best talent’.

Although considerable attention is being paid to generational differences, much of it is anecdotal. Whilst there is some controversy about segmenting workgroups by generation (Kowske, Rasch et al. 2010; Levenson 2010), individuals are influenced by their experiences and environment and for this purpose the generational distinction serves as a useful categorisation. This view is supported by Pilcher (1994), who conceded that the likelihood of a generation developing a distinctive consciousness is dependent on the tempo of social change ... and generations were conceptualized as one of the driving forces of social change and progression” (483-484).

### ***2.7.1 The ‘Generation Y’ Workforce***

Generation Y is the most recent demographic group to have entered higher education and the workforce (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008). Whilst there is considerable debate about the legitimacy of specific ‘characteristics’ for Generation Y and the implications of these for workers, there is a growing body of research around this subject. For instance, the Lehman Brothers Centre for Women in Business at the London Business School launched a consortium to explore the issues surrounding Gen Y in greater detail (Kelan 2008), suggesting this to be a legitimate platform from which to analyse generational differences. Because this thesis focuses on the younger cohort, only Generation Y is discussed here.

The traits of Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994) include being independent, well educated, upbeat, open-minded, sociable, technically-literate, adverse to

slowness, highly informed and 'likely to rock the boat'. However, there is little empirical evidence about the work values and career preferences of Generation Y (Dries, Pepermans et al. 2008 citing Jennings 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002). On an individual level, Generation Y workers are likely to be entrepreneurial thinkers, self-reliant, ethnically diverse, polite, curious and energetic, respectful of their parents and grandparents, financially empowered, and conservative investors (Burke and Ng 2006; Kelan and Lehnert 2009).

A defining shift in shaping Generation Y is the changing nature of work and the workplace. Significant environmental and technological changes have impacted the education, communication styles and expectations. The growth of social networking, and corresponding changes to the way in which work is performed, have had a major impact upon the way this generation view work. So far, there has been little attention paid to youth experiences and understanding of early career choice and experience as a whole (Taylor 2002).

Generation Y workers are the most formally educated generation ever, with over 70% completing high school. Of these, 40% have gone to university and a further 40% have undertaken some other post-secondary training (Sheahan 2005, 31). The implication of this for organisations is the challenge of developing and retaining this highly mobile and demanding group. Early evidence suggests that Generation Y are not motivated by money, with the vast majority only staying in the same job for an average of 1.1 years even if they are on a six-figure salary – with bonuses (Sheahan 2005).

Sheahan's findings are supported by much earlier research by Brown (1976), who discussed the roles of values in society as a determinant of motivated behaviour, suggesting that the new generation of workers, being more educated than ever before, no longer share parents' values, but yearn for more rewards from life than work and pay offer. Unfortunately, Brown fails to expand on her statements and does not outline what these rewards might be. Later, Muchnick (1996) attempted to fill in the gaps by suggesting that Generation Y's need room to create and a chance to establish their own identity in the workplace, as well as need to have autonomy,

latitude, trust and a sense of entrepreneurialism in order to be productive and fulfilled.

Although the more recent Shaw and Fairhurst (2008) research findings on attraction appear limited because they rely on in-depth interviews with young professionals from the London Business School, other authors have concurred that Generation Y are extremely focussed on what they want from work. Kelan (2008) concurs that Generation Y is money and lifestyle oriented, with a focus on their own interests. They also look for work roles and/or organisations that demonstrate support for work-life balance strategies and policies (Carless and Wintle 2007). Generation Y have also been labelled 'reflexive' because of their constant reflection on the relationship between themselves, work and life (Kelan and Lehnert 2009). Another label is the "X-treme sports" generation, because they thrive on the adrenaline rush of new challenges and opportunities, demanding that managers learn their capabilities quickly and push them to their limits (Martin 2005, 39).

Some of the work satisfaction influences on Generation Y are not new, but it may be that they play a more vital role in retention than with other generations. Certainly, because they are more highly skilled, they are therefore more highly paid and in a better position to sell their 'product' to the highest bidder. This may in fact mean that high financial rewards are a 'given', so that the satisfaction of more intrinsic factors therefore becomes a more important consideration. This is supported in the Rowland 2004 report, commissioned by the Queensland Resources Council, to examine attraction and retention within the Queensland mineral resources sector. This study found that most graduates did not place salary as their number one motivator; rather, workers favoured regular feedback, professional development, challenging work, freedom, flexibility and good coaching and mentors. This supports Martin's (2000) findings that Generation Y's are:

*"Stimulus junkies who thrive on challenging work, love freedom and flexibility, hate micromanagement, and are fiercely loyal to managers who are knowledgeable and act as caring coaches who mentor them and help them achieve their goals." (p. 5)*



Interestingly, a study of the factors leading to nurses, choice of profession (McCabe, Nowak, and Mullen 2005) found that younger participants placed significantly more emphasis on intrinsic work factors such as mentally challenging and exciting work, and less emphasis on professional prestige and community respect. However, it could be expected that less emphasis would be placed on professional prestige when choosing such a profession, given the relatively hard work and low wages associated with this career. Autonomy of work, pleasant working conditions, opportunities for creativity and originality and flexible working hours were also rated more highly by the younger survey participants (McCabe, Nowak, and Mullen 2005, p. 395).

These considerations are also pertinent for organisations competing for the best graduates. More recent literature suggests (Connor and Shaw 2008; Shaw and Fairhurst 2008) that with normative data sets for selection tests having been created using subjects sampled from older generations, there is a strong likelihood that the brightest and best of the younger generation may have been overlooked, and that existing graduate training and development programs may be ineffective in nurturing and retaining these critical workers. An example of a responsive approach to training and development is the global fast food franchise McDonalds, a major employer of both Generations Y and Z. This company has identified the different characteristics of Generation Y and has revised the way in which it engages and develops its massive workforce. This has included the use of creative and flexible technologies, mentoring and coaching, increased opportunities for social interaction, provision of instant feedback and development of a multi-directional career system (Shaw and Fairhurst 2008). However, there are also a number of studies that contradict these findings or provide mixed and inconsistent results.

Kowske, Rasch et al. (2010) suggest that empirical research on work-related values indicate that generations are more similar than different and that the differences that do exist are inconsistent and tend to contradict generational stereotypes. They also suggest that more research needs to be undertaken into generational differences and, more importantly, into generational patterns in turnover intention. There is also the challenge of finding a way to distinguish normal life cycle stages in attitudes and decisions about work that are largely the same in each generation, such as family life and the corresponding changes in the importance of the work performed, from the

ones that are truly and meaningfully different (Levenson 2010, 258). A key challenge for academics and researchers alike, as highlighted by Levenson (2010), is the lack of data that allows reliable comparisons of how different generations felt and made decisions about work at similar stages in the life cycle.

It is strongly suggested that without appropriate encouragement, reward and recognition, Generation Y is the generation most at risk of becoming de-motivated. It follows that employers who provide the right balance of financial rewards and professional development will be the best placed to recruit and retain this generation (Hudson 2009, 54). As managers respond to the changing values of their workers, this in turn may ultimately affect organisational values, particularly when these young workers take on top leadership positions (Smola and Sutton 2002). Current research into leadership styles also suggests younger generations are more insistent about expressing their values than previous generations, therefore a more individualised and diverse development approach needs to be taken (Briscoe, Hoobler, and Byle 2010). No matter which generations constitute an organisation's workforce, work value differences are an essential area for investigation and further research. This is even more vital given the recent literature that highlights challenges presented by our future workforce: namely, Generation Z.

### ***2.7.2 Generation Z: Our Future Workforce***

There is very little research about Generation Z (as defined in Chapter One, Section 1.2). Unlike their Generation Y counterparts, Generation Z is growing up in a more conservative economic environment that has been marked by periods of severe downturn and global crisis. This generation has very different skills and expectations than Generation Y and has been labelled the "silent generation" for the time they spend online using the internet. Because of the ageing population remaining in the workforce longer, and their smaller numbers, Generation Z will be a scarce resource more likely to be offered casual and short-term contracts (Matthews 2008). Matthews (2008) also suggests that they are extremely imaginative, lateral thinkers, who will form an essentially transient workforce. The available literature suggests that Generation Z needs to be supported from an early age to ensure individuals are matched to the right job and career if they are to reach their potential. In the words of Hall:

*“The ‘happy little secret’ here is that we get a multiplier effect when we support individuals, at a very tender age, in pursuing their own paths with a heart.” (2004, 11).*

Clearly, the organisational benefits of maintaining a workforce who are committed to their career of choice are immense. There is also an indication that Generations Y and Z identify with their careers and make choices that serve to assist with the development of who they are as individuals, rather than having ‘just a job’. This is especially so for those who are considering and pursuing careers in the arts. The unique demographic characteristics of workers in the ballet sector will add a seldom explored but extremely relevant dimension to the research.

## **2.8 Ballet Career Attraction and Retention Drivers**

*‘It has been said that there is no such thing as art – only artists. It is even truer to say that there is no such thing as dance, only dancers’ (Bland 1976, 133).*

Research into the impact of intrinsic rewards, in an organisational context, has progressed since Ausubel’s work was published in 1948; but there is still a significant gap in academic research regarding the relationship between intrinsic rewards and worker retention in the public and non-profit sectors, including the performing arts. A number of researchers (Throsby 1994; Throsby and Withers 1979; Throsby and Hollister 2003; Towse 2001; Menger 1999; Frey 1997) have extensively researched the economic conditions of artists, and Throsby also concentrates on career transition. Little research focuses on the factors behind the reasons why artists, including dancers, make work and career choices. McCarthy, Brooks et al. (2001), in their attempt to describe the world of the performing arts, suggest data on career dynamics and the experience of artists over time, including employment decisions, is extremely limited. More recently, some progress has been made by scholars to fill the gap (Vincs 2004; Bennett 2009; Montgomery and Robinson 2003; Jeffri 2005), but more a more sustained approach and comprehensive research is required in order to better understand the career choices, expectations and experiences of dancers.

A study of ballet dancers provides an excellent background and opportunity to explore the relationship between intrinsic rewards and a worker's intention to stay (retention) in a unique setting among a more extreme cohort. A large number of professional ballet dancers find that their careers abruptly come to an end due to injuries sustained through the long hours and vigorous training, rehearsal and performance programs which characterised by their six-day working weeks. Once they are injured to a point where they are unable to perform, these workers can find that they have very few opportunities for transfer to other work in the companies and have their contracts terminated. Yet despite the risks, many train for long hours over many years to seek a career in this profession. Wainwright and Turner (2006) suggest:

*“Classical ballet dancers work in a community permeated by a culture of ‘youthful ageing’, where a thirty-year old is perceived as ‘old’ and even young dancers who are injured are liable to feel that they are losing precious time out of their short careers.” (p. 245)*

However, the passion and dedication these dancers possess for their craft does not appear to deter them from pursuing a career, which leads to sacrifice, dedication and often physical and emotional pain. Indeed, Abra (1997), in his article “The Dancer is a Masochist”, suggests:

*“From any logical or utilitarian angles there should be no ballet dancers...what sorts of persons would choose such a seemingly unrewarding pastime? And why?.”(1997, 34)*

Dancers are perceived to be committed and loyal workers, often only leaving their employers when injuries render them unable to perform or their funding expires. Hamilton (1998) explains that dancers are passionate about their careers:

*“They are willing to push past the point of exhaustion in order to achieve their goals. Each day a challenge that requires sweating it out in class and putting up with sore muscles and blisters. Nothing is as difficult as dance or, paradoxically, as satisfying when all goes well.” (p. 2)*

It could be assumed that the key career attraction and retention drivers identified in the literature presented in this chapter are applicable generically, but there are a number of unique industry characteristics within ballet that could influence some critical departures from these drivers. Kogan's (2002) working model of career development in the performing arts clearly demonstrates a multitude of forces across a dancer's life span that are likely to influence the choice and maintenance of a performing arts career. Among these are inherited talent; personality; physical attributes; parental influences; arts-related training and performance; advanced training; career motivation and resilience. Clearly, there are some synergies here with the intrinsic motivations cited as reasons for career choice in the public, community and not-for-profit sectors.

Very little research exists on the motivation to enter ballet as a full-time career. Given the low pay that most dancers experience, the one certainty is that dancers are not extrinsically motivated by financial reward. Comparisons have been made between professional athletes and dancers (Bennett 2009b; Kogan 2002) who have similarly short term career expectancy; however the major difference is that professional athletes have the capacity to earn significant sums of money during their relatively brief careers – often enough to last a lifetime with a great deal leftover – whilst professional dancers earn rather modest sums during their relatively brief life on stage (Kogan 2002). Kogan's (2002) research suggests that even with such limited extrinsic rewards, dancers take immense satisfaction in what they have accomplished and maintain that they would eagerly choose such a career again. For example:

*“It's no good being able to continue to dance unless it's something that you yourself feel you have to do. That fundamentally you love – but love, I think, is not the right word – that you have such a passion for dance, and that can mean love or hate, that you can't really function without doing it”.* (Maina Gielgud, the longest serving Artistic Director of the Australian Ballet and now Ballet Director, Royal Danish Ballet, cited in Potter, 1997).

Ballet dancers, as with artists from the other performing arts, find it difficult to articulate what actually drives their commitment to their profession, and indeed, what keeps them working within the industry. However, one key theme is an inner drive or feeling that they may have possessed for years. Generally, dancers start dancing seriously early; typically at the age of ten. McCarthy, Brooks et al. (2001) sum up the drive of all performing artists by suggesting that performing artists are motivated by the love and pleasure of creating works and performing.

From this description, a very romantic image of the lure of ballet as a profession emerges. However, the harsh realities of a career in dance are less romantic, as cited by Gordon (1983) in her extremely contentious insight into the ‘real’ world of ballet:

*“As I began to talk to more and more dancers, the extent of their loss of self became apparent. I learned that dancers must sacrifice any semblance of a social or emotional life if they are to advance in a fiercely competitive and overcrowded field; that dancers are often injured because of undue pressure to perform when they are ill or exhausted or already suffering from a minor injury; that anorexia nervosa, a psychological disorder in which young girls starve themselves, sometimes to death, because they perceive themselves as fat when, in fact they are not, is a prevalent problem among female dancers. And I found that dancers have terrible difficulty facing the real world once they leave the world of dance. I discovered that there was as much anguish as art in ballet, and that the anguish was created by the ballet establishment; it was not inherent in the art.”(p. xviii)*

Menger (1999) indicates that despite the harshness of a ballet career as highlighted above, as well as the evidence of low returns and a high degree of income inequality, artists are not deterred from entering the occupation in growing numbers. Neither do they withdraw from artistic careers, as would be expected when compared to research undertaken in many other sectors. Dancers are completely ‘engaged’ in dancing, and when not performing spend much of their own time attending classes to keep their body in prime physical condition (Kogan 2002, 10).

Fewer workers leave artistic occupations than leave typical non-artistic work in any given period (Filer 1986, 59). Factors such as the variety of the work undertaken, a high level of personal autonomy, opportunities to use a range of abilities and to feel self-actualised at work, a strong sense of community, a low level of routine, and a high degree of social recognition, are all cited as possible attraction and retention levers by Menger (1999). However, none of these have been tested. He goes on to ask: “*Are artists irresistibly committed to a labour of love, or are they true risk-lovers, or perhaps “rational fools”?*” (p. 554).

Clearly, this area requires more research and empirical evidence to determine the critical retention drivers. Therefore, this research questions the relationship between the work performed, the nature of relationships between workers and their supervisors and the work group, and the level and extent of commitment and satisfaction and other intrinsic rewards gained from the work and the impact of these on career retention outcomes. For these questions to be answered, the notions of career, career aspiration and career choice has implications for retention. The thesis also questions whether the lack of alternative work is an important factor in remaining with a company.

## **2.9 The Nature of Career**

A career, which is a pattern of jobs or positions, has traditionally been associated with progression and advancement through the ranks of an institution that is typically organised on rational and bureaucratic principles (Bennett and Moore 2008). The concept of career is useful for organisational planning purposes and is a mechanism by which managerial talent is grown from within (Adamson et al. 1998). However, Adamson et al also concede that when people talk about having a career, they tend to refer to their ‘work’ career, which is narrower in perspective and is the way in which career is viewed by the thesis study participants. The historical beginnings of the term ‘career’ are rooted in Latin, with the word originally being ‘carrara’, meaning a carriage travelling along a road (More, Carroll, and Foss 2009, 1). A career is still seen to be a journey, but the nature of the journey is no longer a linear one in which one can plan to move from Point A to Point B along a steady road. Consequently, career research has grown from traditional disciplinary perspectives,

with a focus on individual and organisational interaction, to a field of study which now has a multi-disciplinary orientation, with reflections on the nature of a broader range of dynamic interactions, careers of women, work and family conflicts, career transitions and the notions of career commitment and loyalty (Adamson, Doherty and Viney, 1998). Such diversity in the career development fields of study, as well as philosophical differences between the theoretical schools, provides an opportunity for a more open-minded approach to the possibility of not only integrating these approaches, but also to the development of new insights (Chen, 2003). Changes in generational attitudes to work, along with the structure and nature of work itself, challenge the notions of what constitutes a career and the way in which careers progress.

Careers have traditionally been perceived as a linear upward movement, and promotion was more often on the basis of seniority – this being the experience and number of years in the organisation – rather than on merit. However, in today’s changing workplace careers are increasingly non-linear and less predictable, and movement and/or promotion is based on transferability of competencies and internal work values (Sullivan, Carden, and Martin 1998). Today’s flatter and more flexible organisational structures also challenge the traditional nature of linear career promotion strategies. As Hoekstra suggests:

*“Educated individuals became entrepreneurs of their own career, building a portable repertoire of competencies to maintain and enhance their market value. They choose jobs fitting their personal goals as far as market conditions allow.”*(2011, 159)

Hoekstra’s findings are supported by the thesis study participants, where careers are selected on the basis of personal goals and are more aligned to a profession than to a longer-term career plan. Their career aspirations and expectations are generally considered within the context of the work they are seeking or possess, but not in terms of the employer or organisation.

The concept of the “protean” career emerged in the late 1970s and provided a new insight into how careers were viewed (Hall 2004). The protean career is



characterised by a shift from the traditional linear career with progression through a single firm and occupation to one which follows active career navigation, often with short-term transactional relationships with employers, to achieve personal career fulfilment (Bridgstock 2005). Bennett (2009a) defines careers in the arts as protean, so named after the mythological Greek sea god Proteus who was able to change form at will in order to avoid danger. She further explains that the term reflects the nature of those involved in the creative industries because of the continual need for development and attainment of skills to meet each new challenge, as well as pre-empting general labour force trends. Such careers are characterised by personal freedom; psychological success rather than one based on position, level or salary; and professional rather than organisational commitment (Hall 2004; Briscoe, Hoobler, and Byle 2010; Bennett 2009). What is clear is that traditional definitions of career, with an emphasis on hierarchy and linear progression and development, no longer fits within today's environment of turbulence and organisational change. There exists a need for a much broader definition: one that embraces what an organisation wants as well as what an individual wants (Adamson et al. 1998).

The research literature on careers is typically divided into two 'camps': the objective career approach, which tends to reflect career journeys and maps, and the subjective approach, which focuses primarily on the meaning people attach to careers and their experiences (Gunz and Heslin 2005). Until recently, much of the research has focused on the objective approach, but, as Gunz and Heslin point out, careers are socially constructed, and one of the strengths of a subjectivist approach is that it has the potential to "*uncover the kind of deep structure that holds societies together or drives them apart*" (2005, 109).

The key measurement tools used by organisations to determine career success need to be reassessed due to the subjective and very personal nature of careers in today's environment. It is also suggested that academics, practitioners and workers have not yet developed the vocabulary to understand the new era of careers (Adamson, Doherty, and Viney 1998) and that career research needs to focus more closely on individual subjective experiences. LaPointe (2010) suggests that this is slowly changing and the concept of career identity has been explored since the mid 1990s. This new approach relies on a subjectivist approach which attempts to identify an

individual's attributes, beliefs, values and motives and the relationship to, and impact on, career choice, particularly in an ever changing career context.

This subjective and identity-based linkage between the individual and career choice was explored, to some degree, by Stevenson and Schneider in 1999 (as cited by Devadason, 2008), who coined the term 'aligned ambitions' to describe teenage ambitions that linked specific education and employment trajectories. Whilst Stevenson and Schneider's work stemmed from a comprehensive comparative analysis of documented teenage perceptions in the 1950s and 1990s, it lacked a specific focus on career aspirations and focussed on an American educational framework. More recently, Stokes and Wyn (2007) drew on their data from two major Australian studies of young peoples' views on careers, and their career trajectories, to conclude that transition from education to career is a process of identity development; and that the active investment they make to produce identities foreshadows the emergence of new meanings of career. This also supports the work of Goodwin and O'Connor (2005), who concluded that young peoples' career choices were characterised by 'individual level complexity'. Clearly, current research into the nature of careers increasingly view it not as a linear and long term process, but one that reflects a set of choices that individuals make, reflecting their personal values and aspirations (Oakland, MacDonald and Flowers, 2012; Fouad and Bynner, 2008).

There has also been little research into the relationship between what Earl et al (2011) refer to as 'career decidedness': where those who have made a firm decision and pursued their career, and their subsequent work outcomes. Some exceptions exist, for example, Earl and Bright (2007) found, in their study of new graduates in the first 12 months of appointment to first job, that career decidedness predicted organisational commitment. In another five year longitudinal study of 131 new graduates in a large consulting firm, Earl et al (2011) found that career choice predicted resignation behaviour. The findings suggest there is a correlation between career choice, career expectation, organisational commitment and turnover; however, there is little further research to support this.

Research on career stages has confirmed that people in the early career phase tend to be more committed because of career development and involvement, whilst those in mid-career tend to commit because of job security and those in late career are more likely to commit because of income, involvement and employability (Hess and Jepsen 2009). However, much of the earlier research does not pursue the impact of the changing nature of work, generational differences on these career stages, and the related drivers for retention and organisational commitment and satisfaction.

Dries, Pepermans et al. (2008) suggest that little research has been devoted to the nature of career success although the construct itself has often been used as a research variable. Traditionally, career advancement corresponds with a rise in status, prestige and increasing income (Bennett and Moore 2008). However, this linear and 'orderly' progression of one's career is no longer the norm in many industrialised countries where skill and expertise determine career progression rather than time and loyalty to the employer. Thus, further research needs to be undertaken into identifying the factors that predict career success in order to effectively select and develop high potential workers (Wayne et al. 1999), particularly given the ever increasing cost of labour investment and development.

In summary, there is an argument for a fundamental shift in the way in which human resource strategies and policies are developed and implemented in relation to learning, development and career progression. Career development strategies are not about what the organisation wants – they are about what the individual wants – and how some level of congruence can be achieved with organisational goals and needs. The motivations underlying career attraction and retention for young people also has implications for the public and not-for-profit sectors if they are to remain competitive in attracting skilled talent.

## **2.10 Career Choice: Industry Comparisons**

This section has been included in the chapter because of the types of organisation's the Phase Two study participants are working within. The mainstream industry cohort represent both private and public sector work and the ballet cohort work within community based organisations. Careers are important because their

determination contains essential meaning for the individual and their environment and holds a large part of the meaning of life's journey (Hoekstra 2011). The choice of a career is then of vital importance. Hoestra (2011) calls the unfolding career determinations a 'career identity', which for some is evident from childhood or adolescence and for others gradually takes shape through personal experience. This career construction also links to the Marcus and Nurius 1986 model for 'Possible Selves' outlined earlier in this chapter. Career aspirations also reflect the strength of an individual's intention to be active in a particular career field and they consist of a cluster of needs, motives and behavioural intentions that individuals articulate with respect to different career fields (Mayrhofer et al. 2005). Bain (2005) reinforces the importance of the linkage between self and career choice:

*“Work is one of the more important parts of an individual's sense of self and that work plays a vital role in the narratives that individuals weave about their lives” (p. 27).*

In discussing the impact of extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards on the desire and/or motivation of workers to be attracted to a particular industry/employer, and then remain with their employer, a study of literature on particular industries is relevant. It has been assumed for a number of years that public sector (government) workers, internationally, are motivated to join the public sector, and stay within it, primarily for intrinsic purposes such as the desire to do something for the community and act in the public interest (Perry 1996; Brewer, Selden, and Facer II 2000; Perry and Wise 1990; Crewson 1997). The same could be said for assumptions about decisions to pursue a career with community based and non-profit organisations, including those in the arts. Examining these sectors individually suggests there are differences across industries as well as professions (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006).

### ***2.10.1 The Public (Government) Sector***

Since the early 1960s, scholars and the public administration community have suggested that some individuals have strong norms and emotions about performing public service, and are therefore predisposed to working in this arena (Brewer, Coleman Selden, and Facer II 2000; Crewson 1997; Rainey 1982; Perry and Wise 1990; Perry 1996). There has also been a generally unsubstantiated opinion that

public sector workers are less motivated than private sector workers and as a result scholars have begun to pay close attention to motivational issues, work satisfaction and organisational commitment in public sector organisations (Moon 2000). One suggestion is that this lack of motivation and work involvement was due to frustrations emanating from ‘red tape’ and bureaucracy (Brewer, Coleman Selden, and Facer II 2000). Nevertheless, increased attention on the public sector is also due, in part, to the challenge of attracting and retaining staff to the sector, which has been an issue since the late 1980s (Wright and Davis 2003).

Initial research by Perry (1996) into measuring public service motivation in the United States has led to a scale based upon six dimensions: attraction to public policy making; commitment to the public interest; civic duty; social justice; self-sacrifice and compassion. However, this US public service model and its constructs are quite limited in application to other industry sectors, including the performing arts. In particular, this applies to the dimensions of attractiveness to public policy making, commitment to the public interest, civic duty and social justice. Perry and Wise (1990) initially suggested that public sector motivation was most commonly associated with particular normative orientations, which again bears little relevance to the significant number of Australian public sector jobs that are generally administrative in nature, and where the ‘big picture’ of the ‘public good’ becomes insignificant. This is summed up well by Goodsell (1992) who suggests that:

*“...in administration, one deals not with the forest but with the trees – plus the bushes, shrubs, thorns, rocks and blades of grass”* (p. 246).

Research indicates a more challenging role for public service employers, who are motivated to perform a public service. Whilst admirable, these workers also can be easily disillusioned by the system, particularly if they see their work being ‘compromised’ by too much bureaucracy or a lack of adherence to the goals of providing a public service (Brewer, Coleman Selden, and Facer II 2000). Perry (2000) revisited his early research into the motivational basis of the public sector and devised a new theory that emphasises the need to identify the sources and nature of the influences that motivate individuals, rather than focusing on the ‘fuzzy lines’ of organisational goals and objectives. This is an important departure from the thinking

of others in the field, and his own earlier works; as he now perceives that the role of the individual and their unique characteristics is central to motivational theory. This supports a linkage between individualised reward processes and performance, and particularly intrinsic reward systems. Further analysis of this proposition may identify characteristics individuals deem to be valuable and what they enjoy about their work – and what keeps them there.

Research tends to support the argument that public sector workers are motivated – and de-motivated – by the same core factors as private sector workers: work involvement, decision making autonomy, a sense of importance in what they do (job design), and clear objectives. On the other hand, Wright and Davis (2003) suggest that the ambiguity of work performance expectations; lack of effective feedback from supervisors; and limitations placed by policies and procedures are also to blame for a lack of motivation. However, care needs to be taken with generalisations, for example, a recent British study into the motivations of public sector workers found that it was difficult to differentiate between the extrinsic and intrinsic motives of public and private sector workers. The study found public sector extrinsic rewards were higher than the private sector; real wages were also significantly higher; public servants worked less hours; held longer job tenure and better security (Georgellis, Iossa, and Tabvuma 2011).

A longitudinal study of health care workers suggested a strong alignment between commitment and retention and the focus tended to be on the work people were doing rather than any actual attachment to the organisation (Koch and Steers 1978). There is also a suggestion that job design issues, as a retention driver, are important across all sectors of industry. Indeed, Buelens and Van den Broeck (2007) found that a lower total commitment to work was evident amongst public sector workers and they consistently worked fewer hours, suggesting a motivation to lead a more balanced life. Moreover, they found that respondents from the not-for-profit sector were even more motivated to find a balance between work and family.

The implications of global competition for labour, because of such issues as shortages of skilled labour and the characteristics of Generation Y, means workers are even more significant for the public sector. Indeed, wastage in this sector is at an

all-time high and national strategies, such as “Better, Faster” have been designed to attract quality staff to fill the places of those who have become disenchanted and left (Taylor and Pick 2008). Studies of Australian university students have indicated that the public sector is at the bottom of their list of choices for a career upon graduation (Taylor and Pick 2008). The non-profit sector struggles even more with the challenges of attracting and retaining well skilled and trained workers. In contrast to their commercial and government ‘competitors’, this sector is often unable to offer competitive salary packages (at the mid and high levels) due to a range of budgetary and legislative constraints.

### ***2.10.2 Community Based/Not-for-Profit Organisations***

Leete (2000) suggests that non-profit organisations are formed for one of two reasons: to produce a certain level of quality when it is less than perfectly observed by the consumer, or to produce goods and services while abiding by certain moral, intellectual, aesthetic or religious principles. Generally, however, the not-for-profit and community based sectors have limited financial resources at their disposal and would have difficulty in meeting the salary packages offered by the private, commercial sector. Nevertheless, there are a number of occupations within the not-for-profit sector that can be examined to infer some trends in commitment to work, such as the reasons why they work in this area and what keeps them there. Considering the organisational goals of non-profit organisations are best achieved by intrinsically motivated workers or who identify very closely with those goals – indeed, they are inherent to the service being provided (Leete 2000). Leete justifies this statement by providing an example of the job of a priest, where the parishioners may object to confessing to a priest who is motivated by anything other than faith. Smith’s (2005) preliminary analysis of job retention in the welfare industry found that the role of supervisors as mentors was vital, as was perceived organisational support. However, the impact of negative community views toward their role had a negative influence on their decision to stay in the industry.

In terms of community based work, the nursing profession has also been subject to academic scrutiny, with research being undertaken on motivational and attraction drivers (McCabe, Nowak, and Mullen 2005); job commitment (Leong, Huang and Hsu, 2003 cited in McCabe, Nowak et al. 2005); and intentions to leave (Krausz,

Koslowsky, Shalom and Elyakim, 1995 cited in McCabe, Nowak et al. 2005). Common elements between all areas of research were positive feelings related to work autonomy, work challenge and an ability to participate in decision making processes. Similar results arise from studies examining social workers, welfare workers and community based field staff. For example, Rycraft's (1994) study of Child Welfare Caseworkers found these workers were highly committed to their work, despite job adversities and relatively restricted financial rewards. Their commitment to the protection of children and positive role in enhancing family relationships precluded any serious consideration of alternative employment.

There appears to be an overriding theme amongst these workers in the community based and not-for-profit sectors: a passion for their work and an inherent understanding of their value and worth to society.

## **2.11 Career Fact and Fiction: Congruence Between Career Aspirations and Work Reality**

Although little research has been undertaken on the work values and career preferences of young people, a picture is emerging of a concerning lack of congruence between the career aspirations of young people and the actual work performed and career that presents. Career aspirations reflect the strength of an individual's intention to be active in a particular career field and they consist of a cluster of needs, motives and behavioural intentions that individuals articulate with respect to different career fields (Mayrhofer et al. 2005). From an HR point of view, knowledge about future workers' career concepts and preferences are essential to tailoring recruitment and development efforts successfully (Mayrhofer et al. 2005). Terjesen, Vinnicombe et al. (2007) found, in their study of UK final year university students, that the most preferred organisational attraction attributes were companies who invested heavily in training and development; cared about the workers as individuals; provided clear opportunities for long term career progression; provided variety in daily work; and had a dynamic, forward-thinking approach to their business. Failure to meet these aspirations has implications for not only work satisfaction, performance and commitment, but also intentions to stay.



The transition from study to work is a critical time, and one worthy of investigation. One profession that is known to have high attrition rates in the last five years is teaching, and this has prompted several studies with teaching graduates. Smethem (2007) found that the alarming shortage of teachers globally is exacerbated by the failure to assist them with effective transfer to the work environment of teaching. After what is usually a four-year university course, young teachers face work reality shock when they enter the classroom. A good example of this can be seen in the transition of teachers to the workplace where there is a lack of congruence between the new teachers' beliefs and values and the reality of teaching (Smethem 2007, citing Lortie, 1975; Flores & Day, 2006). It is alarming to consider that realistic job previews, with an emphasis on significant blocks of time in the classroom, and practical teaching placements, are not part of the course of study. Indeed, Smethem suggest that young beginning teachers' experiences and career aspirations may be at odds with those of policymakers and colleagues of previous professional generations (2007).

It is also of concern that current recruitment and selection practices employed by organisations fail to prepare young people for the work and careers they seek. Indeed, the research indicates a clear lack of congruence between the work reality and organisational characteristics identified and 'sold' as part of the recruitment and selection processes adopted by organisations. Irrespective of previous support that realistic job previews and orientation during the recruitment process and time of employment, results in a positive influence on newcomer adjustment and work survival, research also indicates that formal recruitment processes fail to provide accurate information and thus deliver a lower survival rate than informal processes (Saks 1994). More recent studies suggest that graduates exited organisations early in their careers because of a lack of match to pre-employment expectations as well as a lack of cultural fit, training and development opportunities and poor work-life balance and rewards (Earl et al. 2011).

Wilson and Gerber (2008) argue that Generation Y have big plans about their careers, but employers do not appear to have linked such aspirations to the work or the company. Similarly, organisations' that emphasise unrealistic work attributes will quickly be found out by the new graduate recruits who are likely to depart for

other organisations' which they perceive to have these attributes (Terjesen, Vinnicombe, and Freeman 2007).

## **2.12 Linkage to Research Questions**

In order to consolidate the literature review findings within the framework of this research, a brief overview of the consensus, differentiation and gaps in relation to the aims of this study is summarised below.

### ***2.12.1 Key Research Question***

To address the key research question “*What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?*”, this chapter has provided an overview of the existing literature. There it is limited literature regarding the unique characteristics and challenges for career attraction and retention for Generations Y and Z. It is also clear that much of the evidence provided in support of changing characteristics and increased demands on employers is anecdotal and/or limited, as very little research exists, particularly within the Australian landscape.

#### **Sub Research Question 1: Career Aspirations and Choices of School Aged Youth**

It is clear Adolescent career identity and possible selves construction appear integral to career choice as well as job motivation and commitment. However, it is apparent that the existing Social Exchange, Foci and Bases of Commitment theoretical frameworks have not been integrated with the possible self and career identity construction frameworks. Whilst there is also significant literature available on vocational choices – or lack of them – amongst organisational psychological literature, there is very little linkage to the HR frameworks of attraction and retention.

#### **Sub Research Question 2: Work Experiences and Retention Drivers of Early Career Workers**

Whilst a body of work, albeit somewhat anecdotal and contentious, exists on the career experiences of Generation Y, there is little evidence of research into their career expectations and career reality, once employed.

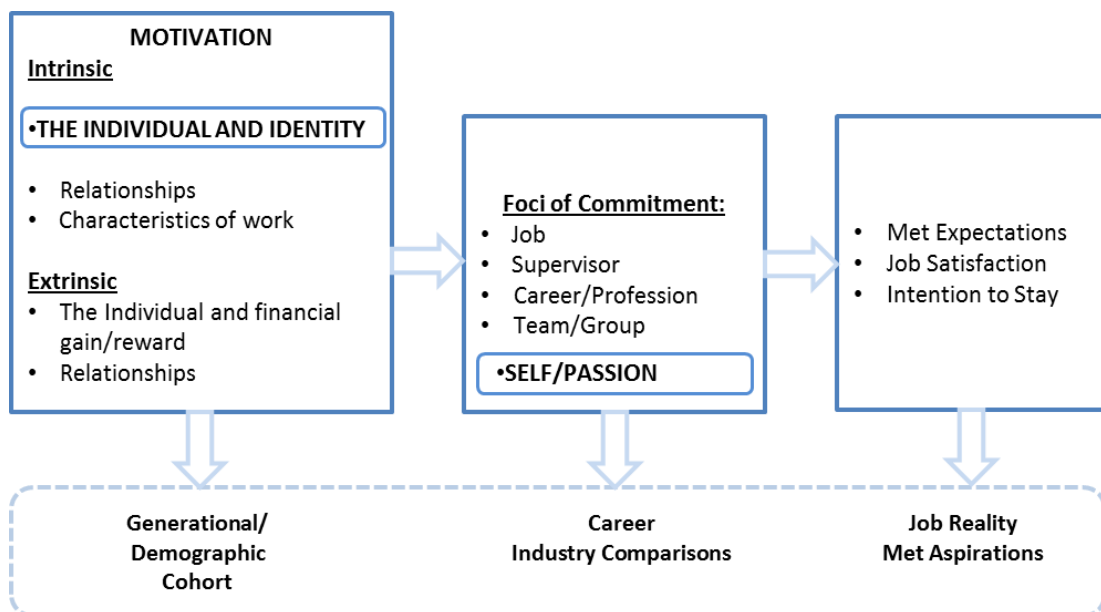
### Sub Research Question 3: Cohort Comparative Analysis: Industry and Ballet

This research will add considerable value to the existing body of work regarding key attraction and retention drivers for the performing arts and specifically the ballet industry. Very little research exists on the career aspirations of dancers-in-training; the congruence between their expectations and/or dreams and the reality of their careers'; and the critical factors leading to their retention. As such, there also exists no identifiable literature providing a comparative analysis into the career aspirations, work experiences and retention drivers of young people across industry and ballet.

## 2.13 Literature Framework

An overview of the framework on attraction and retention drivers identified in the literature, and underpinning the approach for this study, is provided in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 Framework of Attraction and Retention Drivers Identified in the Literature**



**Note:** Highlighted areas (in bold and caps) are new linkages from the literature that have not previously been investigated in relation to motivation, intrinsic attraction and retention drivers and foci of commitment.

The literature findings indicate that career aspirations, as the attraction drivers and levers of young people, are significantly influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Intrinsic motivators include the individual and identity (which includes

social identity, identity construction, possible self, career calling, and the psychological contract), relationship, and characteristics of work (which encompasses work flexibility, work/life balance and career development). Extrinsic motivators also include a focus on the individual but this is within the context of financial gain and reward. Relationships are also important extrinsic motivators, but this links to social exchanges and work relationships. The review of the literature also highlighted that there is some overlap between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drivers of social exchange, work relationships and career development. The demographic cohorts participating as part of the research – secondary school-aged children and early career participants – fit the generational groups known as ‘Y’ and ‘Z’. For the secondary school-aged participants the focus of the study was on the attraction motivators whilst the greater emphasis for retention motivators was in the second phase of the study undertaken with tertiary education/training graduates and dancers in the workforce. The results from the dance group were validated through interviews with former dancers who had retired.

The career choices made by Generations Y and Z are differentiated by comparing those in dance with those pursuing careers in mainstream industry. Another consideration was where the participants aspired to work. The critical foci of commitment that results from the career choices of these individuals are then divided into those related to the organisation, the supervisor, the job itself, the broader career, the team and a commitment to self or ‘passion’.

## **2.14 Conclusions**

This chapter has reviewed the literature related to career attraction and retention along with the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for attraction and retention in the workplace. The concepts of social identity, possible selves, career calling and social exchange have been explored within the context of these intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The frameworks for work satisfaction, commitment and foci and bases of commitment have also been discussed. The chapter has explored the generational differences in work attitudes and career drivers and the attraction and retention motivators within the ballet sector. The nature of careers has been explored as has the attraction and retention motivators for public and not-for-profit industry sectors.

The existing research on the congruence between career aspiration and work reality amongst the younger workforce has also been identified and considered. A number of research gaps or limitations in the literature have been identified, and the discovery of these gaps further support the relevance of the current study and associated research questions. The following chapter will provide a detailed overview and discussion on the research methodology adopted to provide answers to the study's research questions.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

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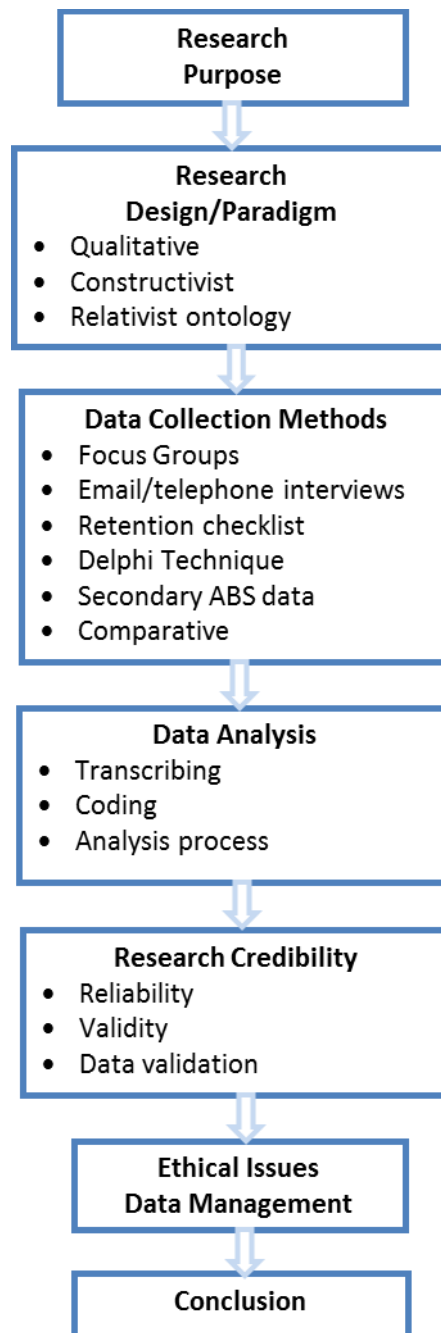
*“Through sharing the worlds of our subjects, we come to conjure an image of their constructions and of our own”*

(Charmaz, K in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000. Handbook of Qualitative Research. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodological framework and research design of the thesis. The research purpose and the research paradigm, which is fundamentally qualitative, employs a constructivist approach situated in a relativist ontology. A comparative method is used to gain a comprehensive and rich insight into the views and career expectations of young people from secondary school, mainstream industry and dance. The design (outlined in Section 3.2) includes multiple sources of data from focus groups and individuals with the aim of capturing broad contextual data as well as in-depth descriptive data. Section 3.3 explains the rationale for the use of focus groups, in- depth interviews and email/telephone interviews and the methods used for participant observation. The processes used for data analysis (Section 3.4), and the ethical issues pertinent to this research (Section 3.6) are also explained. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the research process and provides an orientation to the layout of this chapter.

**Figure 3.1 Research Process**



### **3.1 Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the career aspirations and drivers of young people seeking to enter the workforce and the work experiences and retention drivers for early career workers. The demographic cohorts participating as part of the research fit the generational groups known as ‘Y’ and ‘Z’ (as outlined in Section 2.7 in Chapter Two). The career choices made by these young people are

differentiated by comparing those pursuing careers in dance with those in mainstream secondary education and industry sectors. The critical foci of commitment that result from the career choices of these individuals are then divided into those related to the organisation, the supervisor, the job itself, the broader career, the team, and a commitment to self or 'passion'.

## **3.2 Research Design**

The overall research design utilised a qualitative research methodology framed in a constructivist paradigm. The ontological position taken is a relativist one, based on a subjectivist epistemology. The paradigms underpinning this approach and the methodology are discussed over the coming pages.

### ***3.2.1 The Research Paradigms***

A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view or framework that guides research and practice in a field (Willis 2007). In the broadest sense there are two paradigms: qualitative and quantitative; however, these need to be deconstructed further to explain and clarify the foundations of research in relation to the research purpose and discovery journey. The fields of inquiry within the qualitative paradigm range from the most objective (positivist) to the most subjective (constructivist). The ontological and epistemological philosophical viewpoints are grounded in each of the paradigms used. Drawing on the work of Lincoln and Guba (2000), and with the addition of the fifth participatory/co-operative paradigm outlined by Heron and Reason in 1997, the most widely used and applied paradigms and the ontological, epistemological and methodological philosophies/frameworks are shown in Table 3.1.



**Table 3.1 Alternative Inquiry Paradigms**

ITEM	POSITIVISM	POSTPOSITIVISM	CRITICAL THEORY	CONSTRUCTIVISM	PARTICIPATORY
ONTOLOGY	Naïve realism – “real” reality but apprehendable	Critical realism – “real” reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallised over time	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities	Participative reality – subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos
EPISTEMOLOGY	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/subjectivist/created findings	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; co-created findings
METHODOLOGY	Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogue/dialectical	Hermeneutical/dialectical	Political participation in collaborative action inquiry; primacy of the practical; use of language grounded in shared experiential context

**Source:** Lincoln, Y.S & Guba, E.G 2000, “Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences”, in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, Denzin, N.K & Lincoln, Y.S, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 168.

The positivist paradigm is viewed as the most objective approach and views the researcher as an independent, objective third party who is almost a bystander, and who literally applies the tools and interprets data with no or very little interaction with the subjects in question. At the qualitative end of the spectrum is the constructivist paradigm. This deals with intangible and socially dependent constructs, and is highly subjective regarding the subjects'/participants' views of the world. The participatory/co-operative paradigm is an approach where reality is jointly constructed, as in nature.

Given the nature of constructivist research, it is vital that researchers enter the participants' world as viewed by them, in their own social setting and on their terms. It then logically follows that the data collection, transcribing, coding and analysing processes remain true to this paradigm and are guided by the 'truth' as the participants see it. The researcher has an obligation to analyse and report on what is heard and seen, rather than on preconceived or previously researched propositions, assumptions or findings (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

Table 3.2 (included at Appendix 1) clearly outlines the practical application of the major paradigms to the fields of research. This shows that a constructivist approach requires a greater emphasis on developing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, rather than merely reporting on it. Constructivism is value laden and therefore intrinsically ethical as the participants are not objective bystanders, but active participants facilitating the process (Richards and Morse 2007). It is vital that the research methodology is consistent with the paradigm's philosophy and purpose as explained in Table 3.2.

### ***3.2.2 Qualitative Research Methodology***

There are academic 'disputes' regarding the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of qualitative versus quantitative research, and the basic nature of these disputes is the supposed lack of 'rigour' with qualitative approaches. However, there also exists a substantial body of research supporting qualitative approaches and the outcomes of their research methodologies. The domain of qualitative inquiry offers "some of the richest and most rewarding explorations available in

contemporary social science, and as a field of inquiry it is replete with enthusiasm, creativity, intellectual ferment, and action” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, 1025).

Given that the primary research purpose of this study is to investigate the attraction and retention drivers affecting the career aspirations and choices of young people, a qualitative methodology was selected as the most suitable. This is because qualitative research has the overriding purpose of learning from participants and their experiences. The meanings and interpretations of lived experience can provide the researcher with the opportunity to discover and do justice to their perceptions (Richards and Morse 2007). Studies that focus on individual lived experience require an understanding of the meaning that participants attribute to those actions and allow the researcher to understand deeper perspectives that are only captured through more personal interactions (Marshall and Rossman 1999).

A qualitative methodology relates to the wider research questions, which in this case are exploratory in nature and therefore not restricted to a particular mindset. Given the research questions, it was important to discover the rationales for career choice and drivers of retention as well as the depth of the passion, emotion and commitment involved in these choices. The research questions were designed to discover the underlying nature of young people’s choices and this information could not be adequately identified in a purely quantitative approach.

A number of qualitative methods offer a different ‘prism’ through which to view the world. They provide different perspectives on reality and ways in which to organise a vast amount of information (Richards and Morse 2007). No method is intrinsically superior to others, as each method serves a different purpose; rather, each researcher needs to identify which method is the most appropriate to the research purpose (Richards and Morse 2007).

Richards and Morse consider ‘methods’ to be the broader strategies of phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory; however, many others would argue that ‘methods’ relate to the way in which data is collected: for example, focus groups, in-depth interviews or participant observation (2007). Alternatively, Jacob (1987, 1988) describes six qualitative *traditions*: human ethology, ecological

psychology, holistic ethnography, cognitive anthropology, ethnography of communication and symbolic interactionism; whilst Atkinson, Delamont and Hammersley (1988) offer seven: symbolic interactionism, anthropology, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, democratic evaluation, neo-Marxist ethnography and feminism (cited in Marshall and Rossman 1999). Another 'lens' for defining research methods is offered by Creswell (2007), who defines five broad approaches: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies. Alternatively, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) frame qualitative research within paradigms or theories and discuss seven of them, namely: positivist/postpositivist, constructivist, feminist, ethnic, Marxist, cultural studies and queer theory.

The research undertaken in this study was framed utilising the constructivist paradigm, which matches the research purpose. Initially, a phenomenological paradigm was considered appropriate, but it was clear that a significant component of the research aimed to discover young people's attitudes, views and aspirations, rather than their lived experiences. Whilst a constructivist approach is considered as framed within grounded theory (Creswell 2007), it has evolved from this paradigm to be considered an approach or method in its own right (Denzin and Lincoln 2000).

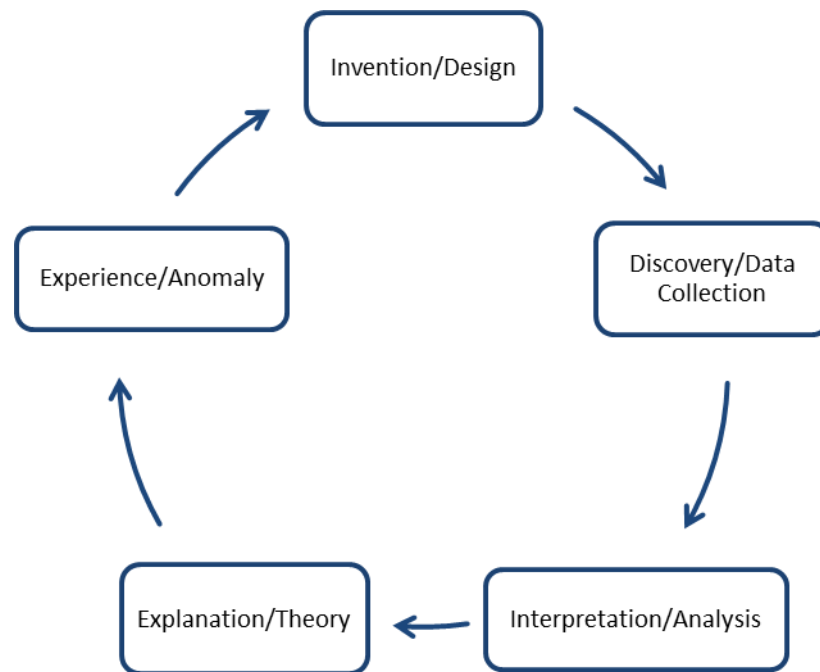
In discussing motivational theory in the public service, Perry (2000) advocates the qualitative approach of interviews and life histories as particularly effective in identifying patterns of behaviour, including motivation and organisational behaviour. The research questions explored within this study draws on similar motivational and behavioural drivers, thus reflecting congruence within the methodological approach. Similarly, Wainwright and Turner (2006) highlight that little dance research draws on first hand observations and interviews, instead relying on secondary sources. While this is not without merit, it does present a limited approach. As the intent of this research is to bridge the gap in the literature by identifying comprehensive and unique findings, first hand observations and interviews were considered vital. This meant that interviews needed to be flexible and exploratory, with questions adjusted for particular target groups or to clarify responses; thus the interview style was also conversational as recommended by Soklaridis (2009).

The qualitative approach taken for this study has theoretical rigour. As recommended by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005), the research strategy is consistent with the research goals and methodology utilised to answer the central research questions. The research draws on both primary (interviews) and secondary (literature review) sources, with the primary sources providing the data on which assumptions can be made and conclusions drawn about the relationship between the cohorts under study. The secondary data serves to support, supplement or challenge these findings. This has obvious implications for the paradigm, ontology and epistemology.

### ***3.2.3 Constructivist Paradigm***

Outlines of the constructivist paradigm philosophy, the framework and its applications are provided in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. A more cyclical variation to these approaches is provided by Marshall and Rossman, who cite Crabtree and Miller (1992) in describing the constructivist approach as ‘Shiva’s circle of constructivist inquiry’. This is shown in Figure 3.2 and demonstrates how the researcher needs to enter the cycle of interpretation with sensitivity to context without seeking any ultimate truths (Marshall and Rossman 1999). It also shows in a visual way that a constructivist approach does not have a specific route with a start and end point. Instead, it can be an ongoing process that follows a route that keeps revisiting the design, data collection, explanation and experience phases until the researcher believes, or the data demonstrates, that the research is complete.

**Figure 3.2 Shiva's Circle of Constructive Inquiry**



**Source:** Crabtree and Miller (1992, 10) cited by Marshall, C and Rossman, G.B. 1999 *Designing Qualitative Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Sage Publications, London, 27.

As outlined previously, the constructivist approach has emerged from the grounded theory paradigm, which seeks to build theoretical frameworks that explain the data (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) or to generate, or discover, a theory from the data (Creswell 2007). The constructivist approach is flexible in that there is an interaction between the data, its analysis, and the experiences of those who are being studied; and it is realistic as it addresses human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). The constructivist paradigm was considered the most appropriate for this research study.

The study gathers and seeks data to interpret respondents' experiences, ideas, values and aspirations in relation to their career expectations, working lives and future career choices. These views, experiences, values and aspirations will not be considered right or wrong in comparison to the existing literature; rather, they will add further information and richness to understanding of dimensions that already exist. The richness comes from the actual experiences and views of the respondents rather than on presumptions of what particular generations and/or career standards or

stereotypes may be. The constructivist approach is supported by data collection from focus groups as well as individuals and, in the case of the dancers, it is verified against the experience of a smaller number of respondents who have retired from dance practice.

### **3.2.4 *Ontology***

The term ‘ontology’ refers to the “*assumptions about existence underlying any conceptual scheme or any theory or system of ideas*” (Flew 1999, 256). In recognition that the diversity of the groups being interviewed in this study may result in differences in values and beliefs, and, thus lead to a sound comparative study, a relativist approach was adopted. It was hoped that a diversity of views would add value and richness to the study, ultimately uncovering the motivations for career attraction and retention.

With reliability and validity in mind, standardised, open-ended questions and focus groups were included to negate any preconceptions the researcher had about the views young people hold in relation to their career choices and employment future, as might arise from the ontology. Further, the utilisation of an audio recorder, backed up by memos and notes, would allow information to be captured and then cross-checked at a later date. Transcriptions of interview data, as well as direct coding of electronic interview responses, were included throughout the study to protect against any re-interpretation of what was said by participants.

### **3.2.5 *Epistemology***

Epistemology is defined by Flew (1999) as simply the body of knowledge. It follows that the understanding of the topic (epistemological assumptions) evolves through the literature review, data collection and analysis. In this instance the epistemological approach was narrative, as the results of the interviews and focus group discussions were designed to provide the data that would lead to a conceptual framework for attraction and retention for Generations Y and Z. This framework evolved throughout the thesis process, rather than being asserted at the beginning. In light of this approach, reality was treated as a social construct (ontology), and understanding *how* this social reality forms was treated as the epistemology.

There are three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics and Social Constructionism. Each embraces different perspectives about the aim and practice of understanding human action, has different ethical commitments, and adopts different stances on methodological and epistemological issues. The interpretivist approach to epistemology is that human and social action is meaningful and that the researcher has to grasp the meanings that constitute the action in order to interpret what the actors are doing or saying (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). This is the critical area of difference between interpretivism and hermeneutics; the interpretivist researcher can interpret meaning, but needs to do so in an objective manner, and to remain unaffected by the process. However, in hermeneutics the researcher cannot be completely objective; every researcher brings with them their own values, culture and beliefs and is completely engaged in the process. Social constructionism suggests that researchers, as all human beings, construct or discover knowledge-based on shared understandings, practices and language (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Given the epistemological stance of this study, a social constructionism approach was adopted.

Knowledge is ‘gathered’ based upon the participants’ understanding and beliefs regarding the world in which they exist, and the researcher constructs theory based upon these understandings and belief systems. Martin (2003) suggests rival research methodologies can at times not only arrive at similar conclusions but also provide complementary ontologies. Martin’s research cites two studies with divergent ontological and epistemological perspectives, which arrive at virtually identical conclusions. This demonstrates the importance of the journey taken, rather than the end point.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

This section outlines in detail the data collection strategy, the methods utilised and a profile of the respondent sample. The goal of data collection and sampling in qualitative research is purposive in describing the processes involved in a phenomenon rather than its distribution and size (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005), as is the case with quantitative research which needs to be representative of a population. In line with this, the primary source of data for this study was semi-structured focus



groups and individual interviews, conducted either face-to face or electronically. In cases where respondents were located in other parts of Australia, interviews were conducted individually, through initial email contact and then followed up with email or telephone interviews. Standardised questions were used for all interviews. However, the questions were varied, without changing their overall purpose, to suit the different cohorts, such as place of training/education (secondary school students and dancers-in-training); and type of employment (dancers and graduates in mainstream industry). Follow-up emails and/or telephone calls were used to clarify responses and information.

Data collection within the study was divided into two phases. Phase One included children aged 14-17 years of age who were either in full-time secondary education or were enrolled in formal full-time dance training; Phase Two concentrated on obtaining data from early career participants in both mainstream industry and ballet, including interviews with retired dancers whose experience was sought to validate the data. With validity in mind, Phase One participants included both public and private secondary school students. Both phases were designed to gather the in-depth information needed for case richness, as recommended by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005).

Table 3.3 provides a summary of the data collection strategy.

**Table 3.3 Data Collection Strategy**

RESEARCH PHASE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	RESPONDENT COHORT	RESPONDENT TYPE	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
<b>One</b>	Focus Groups	Full-time School Participants	Female, Private School	6
	Focus Groups	Full-time School Participants	Female, Public School	5
	Focus Groups	Full-time School Participants	Male, Private School	6
	Focus Groups	Full-time School Participants	Male, Public School	5
	Focus Groups	Full-time Dancers-in-Training	Female Male	7 1
<b>Two</b>	Individual Interviews	Early Career Industry Participants	Female Male	5 1
	Individual Interviews	Early Career Dancers	Female Male	4 1
	Individual Interviews	Retired Dancers	Female	5
<b>Total Number of Participants:</b>			<b>46</b>	

\*Colour denotes differentiation in the research phases.

The use of online communication emerged as an essential channel for overcoming problems of distance, for as Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) point out, it allows the participants and research to interact directly. The immediacy and efficiency allows for interviews to be conducted when geographic or time differences make it difficult and costly to conduct face-to-face interviews. Flowers and Moore (2003) also support the use of email interviewing in qualitative research, having successfully employed this approach in a number of research projects where participants did not live locally or for whom it was a more convenient medium. Flowers and Moore cited the advantages of using such technology in data collection, including increased efficiency linked with the lack of a need to transcribe audio recordings and the elimination of expensive data collection equipment. These findings are supported by Meho (2006) who summarises the findings of 14 studies that employed electronic mail (e-mail) for conducting in-depth qualitative interviewing. These studies also concluded that the use of this medium "...offers unprecedented opportunities for

qualitative research, providing access to millions of potential participants who are otherwise inaccessible...it can be employed quickly, conveniently, and inexpensively and can generate high-quality data” (Meho, 2006, 1293). Email interviewing is also advantageous as it allows for the text to be coded directly into qualitative analysis software packages. In addition, data received via email is exactly what the interviewee wrote; thus this method reduces traditional biases that occur with face-to-face methods (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). The most significant disadvantage of this method for the researcher is the lack of opportunity to observe the participant/s, which can be a critical element of qualitative analysis. It is also limited to those who have access to the Internet and does require the development of new skills and techniques in online communication, including more self-explanatory questions and meticulous attention to detail in the explanatory information that accompanies the questions (Meho, 2006). Nevertheless, in this study a balanced approach was achieved with the conduct of a number of face-to-face and focus groups interviews.

Other forms of data collection included the taking of field notes to support and enhance interview data. These notes included detailed and non-judgemental descriptions of what was observed. Marshall and Rossman (1999) stress that these are fundamental components of qualitative research as they add further dimensions to the observations taken, thus providing additional richness to the findings. Secondary data on the demographic and economic profile of Australians working in the performing arts sector provided important background information and was sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Given the specialist nature of the ballet industry, additional interviews were held with retired dancers. The aim of these interviews was to explore the impact of having to change career focus, to validate the data obtained from dancers-in-training and early career dancers, and to gain a more comprehensive insight and perspective on a career in dance. The interviews were particularly important because of the lack of secondary data for this under-researched sector.

### ***3.3.1 Phase One: Career Aspirations of Secondary School-Aged Youth***

The purpose of Phase One was discovery, thus the study adopted a qualitative approach utilising focus groups as the primary method of data collection. A focus

group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic and is almost always carried out with the collection of qualitative data as its primary purpose, producing a rich body of data (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2007). One of the major advantages of using focus groups as a source of data collection is that participants hear the others' responses and can make additional comments beyond their own original contributions (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005; Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2007; Patton 2002). The use of focus groups also moves the qualitative interview beyond the individual level to examine shared cultural knowledge (Soklaridis 2009). In the case of this study, a major advantage of focus groups was that it was one of the few research tools appropriate for obtaining data from children (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2007). Morgan (1996) also acknowledges the advantages of sharing knowledge and experiences in a focus group setting, but warns that this can also be a weakness as such interactions can often be skewed by group dynamics, polarised views of participants or by the researcher facilitating the focus group discussion.

The contextual richness of what respondents were stating was important, as was the emotion behind what respondents stated. In addition, the youth of the target group reflected a need for a more personalised approach. Stereotypically, young people and performing artists are more comfortable with expressing their feelings physically and gathering data primarily through questionnaires could potentially limit the number of potential participants and could also be an intimidating process.

Convenience sampling for the Phase One focus groups allowed relatively easy access to groups who fitted the criteria regarding age, full-time schooling and/or full-time ballet training. The full-time school respondents were segmented into four distinct focus groups, representing gender and educational setting. Interview questions were semi-structured for all focus group interviews in Phase One. Once key interview questions were presented to the participants, follow-up or probing questions were then asked and participants were also free to expand to add context where they felt necessary. Unlike the approaches used in quantitative research, this approach does not restrict participants; they can explain, in their own words, why they had selected their career of choice, how the choice makes them feel, what they wanted in a company or organisation, and what would make them stay with the company and

their chosen profession. The words and body language accompanying answers to open questions provide insights into participants' passion and desire for their work. This is important as it cannot be fully and effectively achieved through more quantitative processes. The organisation and conduct of focus group sessions was arranged as follows:

### **Focus Group Structure**

1. Four segmented focus groups were conducted with those who were still in full-time school. Convenience sampling was used and participants were drawn from one private/independent girls' school; one group of girls in a public/government school; and two groups of boys, with one group each from the private and public school sectors. This level of segmentation was introduced to determine if there were differences in career values and expectation based on gender and education sphere. It was critical with these young students to make them feel not only comfortable, but to compose the groups effectively so as to elicit as much quality information as possible.
2. Two focus groups were conducted with teenagers aged 14-17 years who were participating in professional dance studies at Youth Ballet WA. These young people were either enrolled in a specialist education program where they were studying by correspondence, were home schooled, or were balancing full-time studies with significant dance training on a part-time basis in a recognised professional development program. This group was not segmented by gender as the participation of boys in professional dance studies is minimal by comparison to girls, and it not possible to locate a sufficient number of boys to the study.

This part of the research specifically focussed on 14-17 year olds. The decision to focus such a specific age group is supported by Stewart, Shamdasani et al (2007), who indicate that *“children and adolescents tend not to mix well with those who are older or younger than themselves and restricting the age range of participants in any particular group is likely to increase the cohesion and facilitate the discussion”* (p. 101).

Age differences and gender influence group behaviour (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2007), so it was important to segment the groups to create rapport and maximise the scope and depth of focus group discussion. Socioeconomic status can also be a consideration for participants still in full-time school – and its impact on their career choices and aspirations – thus the segmentation into public and private school groups. Socioeconomic status and gender were considered of less importance in the focus groups of ballet students as their career choices and aspirations were far more homogenous given their decision to leave full-time school for a professional ballet training setting.

Convenience sampling was utilised to access respondents enrolled in full-time school, with the researcher accessing respondents through connections at her own child's ballet training centre. Whilst acknowledging that convenience sample is at times cited as the least desirable method of qualitative sampling (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005), given the age of the participants this approach provided a level of trust that would otherwise have been difficult to achieve. In this respect the study benefited from a constructivist approach that drew benefit from a relationship with respondents in which they can comfortably cast their stories in their terms, as recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2000).

The use of structured questions for each of the focus groups maintained objectivity and consistency in the data. Stratified purposive sampling, using a segmented approach to the focus groups, added rigour and allowed for a less homogenous sample. Information sheets and parent consent forms were circulated and signed prior to the conduct of the focus group sessions. The participants also completed and signed parent or guardian consent forms prior to the interview, and the returned forms included a brief demographic profile. Each participant was also provided in advance with a list of questions that were to be asked in the focus group interview.

The initial intention was to gather the majority of the data during face-to-face interviews with ballet students at the Graduate College of Dance in Perth. However, the Graduate College of Dance was in a state of flux at the time of the data collection due to a State Government decision to relocate it. The decision represented a change in State Government focus regarding the role and importance of specialist,

performing arts secondary schools and programs. It caused considerable upheaval for the College and necessitated a change in the sampling strategy. The final sample were training full time at Youth Ballet WA, a fully accredited training provider and well respected youth performance company in Western Australia (<http://youthballetwa.org.au>).

Full-time ballet dancers-in-training were selected on the basis of their desire to pursue a career in dance. Students who were participating as a hobby, or as a form of exercise, were excluded. Access to the full-time dance students had the approval of the Director of Youth Ballet WA. This comprised an opportunistic sampling approach, as the researcher had previously been a Board member with the company and had a child who had been a performing member of Youth Ballet WA for many years. This also made it easier to legitimately gain the trust of the students, as they knew the researcher and acknowledged the researcher's familiarity with the program and the context within which dancers-in-training operated. The protocol previously described was followed in each case and this ensured objectivity in approach and also made clear the intention of the research to the participants and their consenting parent and/or guardian.

As with most qualitative approaches, the focus group and face-to-face individual interviews were recorded utilising a digital recorder and notes were also taken. Following the interview, further memos were written. These notes outlined observations, thoughts and emerging themes and questions. A selection of these interview questions, transcripts (with names removed) and supporting memos are included as Appendices 2 to 5.

### ***3.3.2 Phase Two: Early Career Workers***

The second phase concerned early career workers who had completed tertiary education and/or training and who had been in the full-time workforce for five years or less. Phase Two employed individual interviews conducted either electronically or face-to-face. This phase of the study initially included, as part of its design, a case study analysis of two major Australian ballet companies. Accessing the dancers was found to be problematic, and so the approach was revised to identify a specific set of workers or potential workers from across the dance sector rather than a specific

organisation. Accessing dancers still proved difficult, and requests for their participation raised concerns from company management regarding the time commitment to participate in an interview, even though the dancers themselves were keen to participate. Despite a number of approaches, including via the Human Resource Manager of one company, the Artistic Director declined involvement indicating a concern about releasing dancers from their training, rehearsal and performance commitments to spend time on non-core duties. Whilst presenting a challenge to the data collection strategy, such a response provides an interesting insight into the control companies have over dancers.

To overcome this major obstacle in data collection, the researcher utilised two approaches to make contact with working dancers. The first was through the researcher's own industry contacts and referral from industry and ballet colleagues and networks. Six (6) successful contacts and interviews resulted from this approach. Advertisements seeking participation were placed in two major on-line dance magazines: Dance Informa and DANCEtrain. The Dance Informa advertisement did not return any useful responses. DANCEtrain produced two responses: from dance teachers teaching full-time dance students. A list of questions was sent to each of the respondents, reminder emails were sent to those who did not respond within five working days, and responses were provided in writing and sent back to the researcher via email. Given the non-standard working hours, rehearsals, travel with performances and geographical location of the dancers, many of the interviews with dancers were conducted electronically. Telephone interviews also proved a problematic option as the participants could not commit to being contactable via telephone in order to provide data. Whilst face-to face interviews were conducted with four of the early career participants (as outlined in Table 3.4), two were also conducted electronically. This was due to busy work and social schedules on behalf of the participants, and rather than declining from participating in the study, they welcomed the option to provide information using this medium.

In order to validate the material obtained from interviews with early career participants, in both the dance sector and other industry sectors, a checklist of nineteen (19) retention factors was provided at the end of the interviews. Those



participating via email were requested to complete the checklist after the list of interview questions had been answered. The checklist ranked responses according to priority; with '1' representing the retention factor that most participants enjoyed about their work. An 'other' section was included to ensure that participants could identify retention factors not included in the list. The nineteen factors were derived from the literature (Buelens and Van den Broeck 2007; Boshoff and Mels 2000; Bunderson and Thompson 2009; Cameron and Pierce 2002; Carmeli and Weisberg 2006; Chan and Morrison 2000; Cotton and Tuttle 1986; Koch and Steers 1978; Perry and Wise 1990; Porter and Steers 1973), and in particular the Mobley et al's (1979) summary of turnover literature. It was important to include the checklist as it served to validate (or dispel) the research findings that emerged from the focus groups. It also served as a way of obtaining more detailed information about the retention drivers most valued by respondents. A copy of the checklist is provided as Appendix 6 and the response pattern is provided in Section 4.4 in Chapter Four.

Asking participants to complete this checklist at the conclusion of the face-to-face interviews was a deliberate strategy. This was because it was likely participants would be more aware of, and more able to articulate their personal retention drivers at the conclusion of a session where these questions had been pursued in a more general way. The aim was to enable participants to focus more quickly and readily. A potential danger with this approach was that participant choices may have been influenced by the discussions that took place during the interview. Whilst the same level of control over the checklist completion process was not possible for those answering the interview questions electronically, participants were nonetheless requested to complete the checklist when they had completed the electronic interview questions.

Interviews were also conducted with retired dancers associated with the ballet industry who had either been previously employed in the industry or who were still employed but not as active dancers, or those who had trained to a professional level but later pursued alternative career paths. These respondents were considered 'experts' in their field due to their years of expertise, training and experience in the ballet industry. It was important to obtain data about why respondents initially pursued a career in ballet, what they had enjoyed and felt challenged by in that career

and why they had stopped either performing or continuing that role. These interviews complemented and validated the views of the aspiring dancers or those in their early dance career. Again, due to non-standard working hours and geographical location of a number of the willing respondents, face-to-face as well as electronic interviews were utilised.

This data source validation was achieved using the Delphi technique, which is a qualitative, long-range forecasting technique that elicits, refines and draws upon the collective opinion and expertise of a panel of experts (Gupta and Clarke 1996). The Delphi technique is particularly useful in situations where individual judgements are tapped and combined (Powell 2003). In a qualitative research environment, the Delphi technique adds a further layer of richness to the data already gathered and may reinforce, broaden or even conflict with findings. The incorporation of this technique was particularly useful for validating data from the ballet cohort, given there was little literature or secondary data to draw on. Data source triangulation, which involves the use of multiple information sources, also assists in reducing biases that result from the use of a single methodology and develops a more complex and comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005; Patton 2002).

Questions with these five respondents focussed on the key research questions, but provided enough flexibility to modify questions according to each respondent's area of expertise, experience or training. For example, dance teachers were asked to comment on why they made a decision to follow a career in teaching; what challenges they saw for their students; and the extent to which they considered students to be equipped for a career in dance.

### ***3.3.3 Comparative Approach***

A comparison of the sources of data to answer the key research questions was vital. To extrapolate differences between the ballet cohort and the population in general it was important that data for Phase One be sourced from student cohorts in the same age group. This ensured that as well as eliciting the opinions and choices of a particular generation, any differences between those studying dance and those in mainstream education and employment could emerge. Thematic analysis then

assisted with determining whether there were different patterns in the students' responses and possible reasons for these patterns.

The same level of data was collected with the core Phase Two early career respondents: one cohort who had studied to pursue a particular career and were working within that desired field, and another cohort who had studied dance and were now working in a paid capacity in the dance sector. Whilst not a retrospectively longitudinal study, the comparison between the two distinct career stages and cohorts provided valuable data on synergies and deviations between career aspirations/expectations and work reality. Finally, the five respondents comprising retired dancers served to support the findings from the two cohorts in Phases One and Two.

### 3.3.4 Sample Size

As there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry, it does depend upon the nature of the research purpose, the research questions (what you want to know), what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done within time and resource limitations (Patton 2002). The aim is to seek saturation so numbers are controlled by not receiving any new data if enquiries continued.

The sample sizes for the two phases of the research study are shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Sample Size by Phase**

PHASE	STUDY PHASE/SAMPLE NAME	MODE OF DATA COLLECTION	SAMPLE SIZE
Phase One (P1)	Secondary school participants	Focus groups	22
	Full-time dance training participants	Focus groups	8
Phase Two (P2)	Early career participants – industry	Individual interview	4
	Early career participants – industry	Electronic interview	2
	Early career participants – ballet	Individual interview	3
	Early career participants – ballet	Electronic interview	2
	Ballet industry – retired dancers	Individual interview	3
	Ballet industry – retired dancers	Electronic interview	2
<b>Total Study Participants:</b>			<b>46</b>

The comparative approach seeks to gain rich data and experiences from a small group of relevant subjects, rather than using a less rich tool with a larger sample group. In the case of this study, the sample size was also dictated by the limited number of ballet dancers who were available to participate in the study, for demographic and geographic reasons. Interviews for both cohorts were completed once the researcher determined that saturation of the key questions and areas of the study had been achieved. In the case of this study, saturation was achieved relatively early for both research phases.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

As explained in more detail in the following section, data analysis incorporated three distinct stages: transcribing the data; coding the data using a preliminary thematic approach to data analysis; then analysing the data in greater depth utilising an inductive approach. This approach to data analysis demands a heightened awareness of the data with a focussed attention to the data and openness to the subtle undercurrents that may exist (Marshall and Rossman 1999).

#### ***3.4.1 Transcribing***

Clearly, a necessary step from the collection of data is transcribing the data into a format that can be coded and analysed. All focus group and individual face-to-face interviews were recorded, with the permission of participants, using a digital recorder. Verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were made, and these included the thoughts and notations made by the researcher, ready for analysis. With the electronic interviews, the interview question responses returned by email were utilised as transcripts ready for coding.

All transcription was undertaken by the researcher on secure computers both at her home and work offices. All transcription was undertaken using a Microsoft Office Word package, which allowed all documents to be coded consistently as word documents into NVivo software.

### 3.4.2 Coding

The interpretation of data is at the core of qualitative research (Flick 1998) and the coding of data is the formal representation of analytical thinking (Marshall and Rossman 1999). Charmaz (2006) states that “*Coding is the first step in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytical interpretation*” (p. 43). A thematic, rather than a content analysis approach, was taken for the coding and analysis of the data. Rather than establishing categories under which the data was to be coded prior to the analysis of the data, the data was coded based on emergent themes. The process of category generation involved noting patterns evident in the setting and expressed by participants, as recommended by Marshall and Rossman (1999). The study adopted Marshall and Rossman’s suggestion that the initial coding process need not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician, but could usefully identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants (1999).

Initial categories were developed as part of the open coding process, whereby conceptual labels were applied to the content of the transcriptions and sections of applicable data were grouped under these categories as advised by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005). Once the initial categories were developed, the data within the categories was scrutinized further and connections between categories made, or the categories were partitioned into sub categories. This is an axial coding process and provides an analytical framework for the researcher to apply, enabling exploration of the data in a more detailed and organised manner (Charmaz 2006). The process was aided by the use of the NVivo software package, which uses “tree nodes” to form hierarchies of categories based on commonality. An example of the initial coding process undertaken by the researcher is presented in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 NVivo Categories**

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Modified On
Attraction to Ballet	0	0	3/11/2010 10:09 AM	3/11/2010 10:09 AM
Ballet Career Concerns	0	0	3/11/2010 10:10 AM	3/11/2010 10:10 AM
Ballet Career Opportunities	1	2	3/11/2010 10:12 AM	3/11/2010 10:59 AM
Ballet career transition	1	9	3/11/2010 1:47 PM	3/11/2010 1:54 PM
Ballet overseas	1	3	3/11/2010 10:10 AM	3/11/2010 10:42 AM
Ballet Study Reasons	0	0	3/11/2010 10:08 AM	3/11/2010 10:08 AM
Career Choice	1	1	24/08/2009 10:29 AM	24/08/2009 10:29 AM
Dancing Feel	1	5	3/11/2010 10:12 AM	3/11/2010 11:00 AM
economic crisis	1	10	24/06/2009 4:41 PM	24/06/2009 4:44 PM
First job	1	5	16/06/2009 5:34 PM	16/06/2009 5:35 PM
Leadership	0	0	16/06/2009 5:26 PM	16/06/2009 5:26 PM
Learning styles	0	0	16/06/2009 5:39 PM	16/06/2009 5:39 PM
Length of career	1	7	3/11/2010 10:13 AM	3/11/2010 1:45 PM
Maintaining friendships ballet	1	9	3/11/2010 10:11 AM	3/11/2010 10:58 AM
Part Time Work	0	0	24/08/2009 10:21 AM	24/08/2009 10:21 AM
Promotion	3	22	24/06/2009 5:15 PM	26/08/2009 5:11 PM
public or private	2	5	16/06/2009 3:08 PM	24/06/2009 5:18 PM
size of organisation	2	3	16/06/2009 4:58 PM	24/06/2009 3:46 PM
Small business	2	4	16/06/2009 5:02 PM	3/11/2010 1:44 PM
teachers & mentors	0	0	3/11/2010 1:38 PM	3/11/2010 1:38 PM
What do you miss	0	0	3/11/2010 10:48 AM	3/11/2010 10:48 AM
WLB	1	6	16/06/2009 5:42 PM	16/06/2009 5:44 PM
WLB	1	2	16/06/2009 5:10 PM	16/06/2009 5:11 PM

**Source:** NVivo software program coding as developed by the researcher.

Following the advice of Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005, 270), good practice in qualitative research was sought by following the process outlined as follows:

1. Begin by exploring the general research questions.
2. Gather data, and code for respondents' meanings, feelings, and actions.
3. Look for processes and relationships between specific events and general processes.
4. Coding leads to new categories.
5. Collect more data on the developing categories.
6. Go back and read earlier data for the new categories and to formulate new questions.
7. Constantly compare individuals, different events, and the categories.
8. Write memos all the time about categories, processes, and ideas.
9. Move towards memos that are more conceptual and codes that are more abstract.

The emergence of powerful qualitative data collection tools such as NVivo allows researchers to readily and efficiently discover trends, and find correlations and relationships between pieces of data. Whilst tools such as NVivo were originally

filing systems and repositories for storing information, they now have the capacity to highlight trends, relationships and assist with mapping such relationships. Such programs allow for data to be stored, coded and retrieved more efficiently and flexibly than is possible using techniques of cut and paste and the filing of bits of paper (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). A disadvantage is the time taken in initial training, particularly as programs become more complex and comprehensive, and the time taken in actually setting up coding categories and structures. However, in this instance the commitment of time taken was far outweighed by having access to a central and meaningful repository for such a substantial amount of information. There was also less of a risk of losing pieces of information, memos and notes with all information stored centrally.

One of the most useful benefits of such a program was the ability to link codes, categories and data straight to respondent codes. This would have been quite overwhelming and time consuming given the 46 respondents involved in the study and the significant amount of data obtained through the transcripts. This linkage was achieved in the initial data coding process, with transcripts being linked directly to 'cases' that were developed for each study participant. The use of NVivo coding stripes also allowed for instant visual recognition of the cases, categories and sub categories within a complete transcription to which blocks of data were coded.

NVivo also allowed the researcher to identify themes and areas of significant similarities or difference between the cohorts and phases of data collection. Again, this would have been possible using a manual filing and coding system, but not as efficiently, and possibly less accurately, than such a program allows. The writing of memos straight into the program, linking to transcripts, cases and nodes, also allowed data to be managed in one repository rather than in different files or pieces of paper, reducing the incidence of loss or overlooking such data in the analysis phase.

The demographic data obtained in each focus group was collated, within NVivo, using the 'Node Classification' tool. The following demographic categories were developed:

1. Name (code)
2. Sex

3. Age Group
4. Occupation
5. Country of Birth
6. School Type
7. Part Time Work
8. Year at School
9. Number of Years of Ballet Training
10. State of Residence
11. Highest Qualification
12. Years with Current Employer

Clearly, not all categories were relevant to each participant. However, each category was developed with a 'not applicable' code to allow the irrelevant categories to be identified and removed from the analysis of the data set. For example, non-dance participants still in secondary school were listed as 'not applicable' for "years of ballet training". A datasheet was then analysed within NVivo and was also uploaded to an excel spreadsheet to allow for further cross-validation and analysis. A copy of this spreadsheet is included at Appendix 7.

The two distinct phases in the data collection process meant that additional themes and categories emerged as data was transcribed and coded. This was consistent with a constructivist approach and meant that a more complete picture of key themes emerged as more data was collected. The use of NVivo meant that the dates on which new themes and categories (Tree Nodes) were created were listed in the properties for each of the nodes. This made it possible for the researcher to identify the stages of the theme development in the data analysis and reporting phases.

### ***3.4.3 Analysis Process***

Inductive analysis was used as the primary method for interpreting the data. This involved immersion in the details and specifics of the data to discover important patterns, themes and interrelationships, and then exploring and confirming the findings guided by analytical principles rather than purely by rules as advised by Patton (2002).



As highlighted earlier, data analysis was conducted in stages aligned with the two distinct phases of the data collection process. As a result, the development and refinement of categories and sub categories became an ongoing process, with categories and sub categories developed with each phase of the data collection and analysis. In addition to this, categories were refined several times throughout the thesis construction to better reflect the emergent themes. The linking of particular concepts and discussions to both themes (Tree Nodes) and participant codes (Cases) was a particularly useful feature of the NVivo software package, making it easier for the researcher to identify cohort patterns, correlations between demographic data and themes, and patterns and percentages of similarity and divergence between cohorts. These themes, patterns, correlations, similarity and divergence between cohorts and research phases provided the basis for analysis and discussion in Chapters Four and Five.

### **3.5 Research Credibility**

Theoretical and conceptual rigour in the research study was ensured by integrating the research purpose, research questions and methodology utilised with evidence from previous research and literature to support or dispute the research findings (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). Methodological rigour can be demonstrated by documenting approaches, explaining how data access was obtained, how the data was collected, recorded, coded and analysed and how all transcripts were kept (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005). The researcher made every attempt to articulate each phase of the research design in this chapter to protect methodological rigour.

Interpretive rigour was maintained through the informed and detailed use of a software tool (NVivo) to code data, and by making available copies of transcripts, interview questions in the body and appendices of this thesis. The inclusion of primary quotes and text from respondents throughout the analysis chapter of this thesis further adds to interpretive rigour and credibility. Data source triangulation, as part of the second phase of the data collection process, also provides for a more refined level of interpretive rigour with a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon explored through the study.

## **3.6 Ethical Issues**

Compliance with national and university ethical standards and requirements is an essential element of any research. As part of the methodological development of this study, information and consent forms were developed and approval was obtained from both national and university agencies prior to the research being undertaken.

### ***3.6.1 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC) Guidelines and Requirements***

All research undertaken in Australian institutions requires that approval is in accordance with the NHMRC guidelines and that approval is obtained prior to the commencement of such research. These guidelines have been made in accordance with the *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992*. The purpose of the National Statement is: “*To promote ethically good human research. Fulfilment of this purpose requires that participants be accorded the respect and protection that is due to them.*” (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, 7).

The research undertaken in this study constitutes human research. Ethics approval was granted by Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics Committee in 2007. The researcher transferred her PhD studies to Curtin University in 2011 and ethics approval was obtained at this institution also. The Application for Approval of the Research fitted within the Low Risk category, as it was determined that the research did not pose any risk to participants than would ordinarily be faced in their normal daily routines. This form was assessed and approved by the Ethics Coordinator for the Academic School within which the researcher was enrolled. Copies of these approvals, from both Universities, are included at Appendices 8 and 9.

### ***3.6.2 Working with Children Requirements***

Australian law requires that a ‘Working with Children Check’ be obtained prior to the commencement of any paid or voluntary employment or research with minors (under the age of 18). As the participants in Phase One of the data collection stage were categorised as minors, a Working with Children Check was applied for and approved in 2008 (attached as Appendix 10). In addition to this, parent and/or guardian information and consent forms were forwarded to potential participant

families and/or guardians prior to the data collection phase. Interviews with participants in Phase One commenced once the signed consent forms were returned.

### **3.7 Data Management**

In order to reduce the risk of losing the electronic data, the NVivo files were saved regularly on a number of storage devices including the centralised University storage system, on a home drive, on a portable home drive and on a USB device. The risk of having multiple versions of the data was resolved by establishing a process for updating all records, including NVivo, Endnote and thesis chapters, every Monday and Friday.

As stated previously, with the permission of the respondents a digital recorder was used to record the focus group and face-to-face interviews. These recorded interviews were then transcribed by the researcher onto secure, password-enabled computers both at home and at the University. Interviews conducted online were saved as word files and maintained on the home or office password-enabled computers.

Signed consent forms, demographic data sheets and completed electronic interviews were secured in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. To protect the identity of the participants, only blank consent forms or anonymised demographic data sheets have been included in the appendices to this thesis. This undertaking was also given to study participants prior to their involvement.

### **3.8 Concluding Comments**

The objective of this chapter was to provide a concise description of the methodological framework and research design governing the research as well as the justification for the methods used to gather and analyse data.

A qualitative, constructivist paradigm was used to govern the approach to the study. Data collection was comparative in nature in order to extrapolate any differences between those in secondary school, full-time dance training, and early career participants in their chosen careers in mainstream industry as well as ballet. The data

collection strategy consisted of a two-phase approach that included multiple data sources: focus groups, face-to-face interviews and electronic (email) interviews. This allowed the researcher to capture broad contextual and descriptive data from participants. The data collection strategy also involved the use of the Delphi technique to aid data source validation, which assisted in gaining a more detailed understanding of ballet as well as enhancing the validity of the data obtained in both the phases.

This chapter outlined the approach employed for data analysis and the use of the qualitative software package NVivo. It also described the methods utilised to ensure that research credibility was maintained, the ethical issues surrounding the research, and the research ethics approval process. The next chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the research data and details the findings from all two phases of the research.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the two phases of data collection, undertaken with the methodological framework and processes detailed in Chapter Three. The findings from both sources and phases are then compared to provide a comparative analysis of career aspirations and corresponding career realities for secondary school students, dancers-in-training and early career graduates. The data analysis and findings are presented sequentially for each of the two phases of the research.

The analysis of Phase One results (Section 4.2) focuses on career choice and aspirations of future careers among young people. The findings for both the secondary school students and dancers-in-training indicate a desire to follow their passion and a strong linkage between intrinsic motivators and career sustainability. Phase Two (Section 4.3) concentrates on early career experiences, work realities and factors impacting intentions to stay in their current career. Early career workers in both the ballet and mainstream industries rated the ability to find work that is intrinsically fulfilling and enjoyable as the single most important career attraction and retention driver (Section 4.4). However, the findings indicate that those working in mainstream industry are more disillusioned with their roles, induction, training and support. In addition, those working in mainstream industry cited a greater lack of congruence between career expectation and reality than their dance industry counterparts (Section 4.5). The results from the supplementary set of interviews with retired dancers in Phase Two (Section 4.6) provide a more detailed insight into the experience of ballet as a career and suggest that dancers remain passionate about their careers, tending to leave because of injury and the desire to commence a family, and many remain working in arts related careers and industries. Table 4.1 summarises the chapter structure as follows:

**Table 4.1 Chapter Four Structure**

<b>4.1</b>	Overview of data collection strategy
<b>4.2</b>	Phase One findings: Career attraction and retention drivers (intrinsic and extrinsic) for secondary school students and dancers-in-training
<b>4.3</b>	Phase Two findings: Career attraction and retention drivers (intrinsic and extrinsic) for early career participants (mainstream industry and ballet)
<b>4.4</b>	Job retention checklist: Most and least important job retention factors for early career participants
<b>4.5</b>	Comparative analysis between the school-aged and early career cohorts
<b>4.6</b>	Phase Two: Supplementary interviews with retired dancers
<b>4.7</b>	Conceptual framework
<b>4.8</b>	Conclusions

To provide a picture of the findings emerging from within the data, quotes from respondents are presented as the evidence that forms the basis of the analysis. In some cases, quotes are presented in tables to consolidate the emerging themes and present the variance in response patterns. The information is presented in this way for readability and brevity. Conclusions drawn from the research findings and subsequent areas for future potential research are presented in Chapter Five.

#### **4.1 Overview of Data Collection Strategy**

As discussed in Chapter Three, data collection within the study was undertaken in two distinct but overlapping phases (refer to Table 3.3 in Chapter Three). Phase One involved 22 young people aged 14-17 years who were in full-time secondary education, and eight who were enrolled in formal full-time dance training. Focus group interviews with this group concentrated on gaining an insight into their career attitudes, beliefs, expectations and aspirations. Phase Two incorporated interviews with early career participants, with six participants from mainstream industry and five from ballet. As outlined in Chapters One and Three, interviews were also conducted with five retired dancers. Given the broad experience, expertise and knowledge of these participants within the dance sector, they provided a representative voice of professional ballet dancers and were able to contribute their extensive experience and insights into the dance sector. Both phases of data provided information rich data for studying in depth as recommended by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005).

## 4.2 Phase One Findings

This section presents the findings of the first phase of the study; the secondary school aged cohorts, and provides a comprehensive discussion of the categories that emerged from the open coding process and the emergent themes and issues. A comparative analysis between the two sample groups; young people enrolled in full-time secondary school, and young people dancers-in-training is also provided in Section 4.2.8. The two cohorts provided an opportunity for an analysis of any differences in career aspirations and choices between young dancers-in-training and the ‘mainstream’ secondary school student population. This ensured that the research captured the career choices and aspirations of a particular generation, the reasons for those choices, and the desires and fears associated with those choices.

The first phase consisted of six (6) focus groups; four groups of secondary school students segmented by gender and school type (government/public and independent/private), and two groups of dancers-in-training. As outlined in Table 4.2, the participant code for each phase in the data collection process is P1, P2 or P3 (retired dancers). The cohort each participant represents is ‘S’ for school student, or ‘D’ for dancer-in-training. The focus group number and the participant number are also included. For example: P1S11 represents a participant from Phase One, a school student in focus group one, and participant number one in that focus group. P1D22 is a participant from Phase One, a dancer-in-training in focus group two for the dancers and is participant number two from that group.

**Table 4.2 Phase One Focus Groups**

<b>PARTICIPANT CODES</b>	<b>SAMPLE SOURCE/NAME</b>	<b>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</b>
P1S11-P1S16	Secondary School Students: Female/Private School	6
P1S21-P1S25	Secondary School Students: Female/Public School	5
P1S31-P1S36	Secondary School Students: Male/Private School	6
P1S41-P1S41-P1S45	Secondary School Students: Male/Public School	5
P1D11-P1D16 P1D21-P1D22	Dancers-in-Training: Female	7
P1D11	Dancers-in-Training: Male	1

### 4.2.1 Categories

A thematic, open coding approach was taken in the analysis of the transcripts from all six focus groups (Phase One). A number of key categories were developed that reflected the critical points raised by the participants. These are listed in Table 4.3a.

**Table 4.3a Key Categories for Analysis by Cohort, Determined from Focus Groups**

CATEGORY	DANCERS-IN-TRAINING COHORT	SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT COHORT
Ballet Attraction Drivers	✓	
Ballet Career Concerns	✓	
Ballet Career Transition	✓	
Reasons for Studying Ballet	✓	
Source of Career Choice	✓	✓
Reasons for Career Choice	✓	✓
Emotionality of Dance	✓	
Choice of Organisation Type		✓
Role of Teachers and Mentors	✓	✓
Ballet Training Sacrifices	✓	
Work Life Balance Issues	✓	✓

An axial coding process, as described in Chapter Three, was used to identify a number of sub categories which will be discussed as part of the analysis. A list of these is presented in Table 4.3b, and includes a number of subcategories. This list was generated using the key questions asked in the focus groups to define the key categories and a second level of coding to identify the common themes that emerged from these questions. The sub categories cover every topic mentioned by the respondents.



**Table 4.3b NVivo Tree Node Coding: Sub Categories**

NVIVO FIRST LEVEL TREE NODES	NVIVO SECOND LEVEL TREE NODES
Attraction to Ballet	Achievement Challenge Love Performing Thrill Travel
Ballet Career and Work/Life Balance	Achievable Unachievable
Ballet Career Concerns	Body shape Career break Children Competitiveness Education Injury Insular world Lack of creativity Left behind Money Motivation No work Sacrifice Too old
Ballet Career Transition	Arts industry Dance related Dance teaching
Ballet Dancer Success Attributes	Body awareness Confidence Dedication Intelligence Patience Resilience
Ballet Study Reasons	Challenge Competitive Love Passion
Career Choice Influences	Advice from parents Always wanted Career counsellor School advice
Career Surprises	Bullying Communication Disorganised Hours Job tasks Politics Systems and processes
Career Sustainability	Barriers Success factors

The categories that related primarily to the dancer-in-training cohort reflect the concentrated discussion around attractions to ballet as a career and overall concerns with such a career. There was also healthy discussion in response to a question about what participants miss about a ‘normal’ secondary school life as opposed to one filled with full-time dance training and part-time schooling. A rich body of data also emerged from across the secondary school participants on the reasons for career choice, views toward organisational type as an employment choice and issues of work/life balance.

#### ***4.2.2 Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Cohort One – Secondary School Students***

Career attraction was linked primarily to an intrinsic sense of individual identity: career aspirations and choices; and a desire to follow passion in career choice. However, a relationship with others, particularly family, was also discussed in the context of career choice.

##### **The Individual and Identity: Career Aspirations and Passion**

Questions posed to participants from this cohort included *“Have you given any thought to the type of career you want to pursue and why”* and *“If you’re thinking about a career, what sorts of things would be the things you’re looking for? What would attract you to a certain job?”* The majority of students (82%) from the four focus groups in this cohort clearly identified a desire to pursue post-secondary studies in order to achieve their career aspirations. Table 4.4 presents the career choices identified by each of the participants.

**Table 4.4 Secondary School Participants' Career Choices**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>SCHOOL TYPE</b>	<b>CAREER CHOICE</b>
Female	Private/Independent	Drug and Alcohol Counsellor
Female		Family Lawyer
Female		Environmental Scientist
Female		Journalist
Female		Child Psychologist
Female		Family Counsellor
Female	Public/Government	Business Management
Female		Nursing
Female		Unsure
Female		Lawyer
Female		Occupational Therapy
Male	Private/Independent	Graphic Design/Drama
Male		Actor
Male		Musician
Male		Computer Design/Graphics
Male		Barrister
Male		Clinical Psychologist/Teacher
Male	Public/Government	IT
Male		Unsure
Male		Teacher/Unsure
Male		Politician
Male		Police Force/Criminal Psychology/Unsure

There were some gender differences in choice of careers, with the majority of female participants (64%) identifying typically enabling careers, including Psychologist, Child Psychologist, Counsellor and Family Lawyer. Choices from two of the female participants (both private/independent school attendees) were also strongly skewed by significant personal events such as family breakdown, and the positive influences of the professionals who assisted during such events. For example, one young female said:

*'I want to be a Psychologist. When my parents broke up we had to all go and see councillors and stuff and it sort of worked. Talking to people works when you're having troubles.'* (P1S16)

A number of the male participants also selected what could be classified as enabling careers: Psychologist, Teacher, and the legal profession. There was also a focus on the Arts with two (2) out of the eleven (11) male participants indicating a passion for either a career in music or drama. Both were private school attendees.

The interviews also identified an element of family pressure on a number of participants to follow a particular career or study plan. This was strongest amongst the male participants attending private schools (50% of respondents), as can be seen in the following quotes:

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: FAMILY PRESSURE ON CAREER/COURSE CHOICE
P1S31	<i>"Basically my Dad really pushed me to go into Engineering, and I'm like yeah take that and I sort of, I don't know, maybe because he pushed me so hard towards that I pushed against it but I really don't like Physics or Maths, I'm just not interested in them"</i> .
P1S32	<i>"I got offered a contract to go to France and just leave all my family here and everything, I wanted to take it but my Mum wouldn't let me because she wanted me to finish of my [tertiary entrance exams]"</i> .
P1S36	<i>"I've always said Engineering just because everyone asks you, what do you want to do? And I just kept saying Engineering because it works"</i> .

Males appeared to be less sure about their career aspirations than females (9% females unsure; 27% males unsure). However, all males participants unsure of their career choice were from public/government schools (50% were unsure of career choice at the time of the interview).

The influential role of educational institutions in providing correct vocational advice is also evident in other examples. One female participant from a public school voiced disappointment that her lack of aptitude for mathematics meant she may not realise her dream of studying Psychology at university due to a requirement for this subject for entry:

*“We were always told that we needed maths for psychology and that we wouldn’t get into university without it. We were told by our maths teacher”.* (P1S16)

This was incorrect advice offered by the school and the participant was provided with prospective student information and university web addresses, by the researcher, at the conclusion of the focus group interview.

#### **4.2.3 Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Secondary School Students**

The data from the focus group interviews suggests that financial independence was the only extrinsic attraction motivator impacting career attraction choice. A number of the young women (27%) in response to questions such as *“What factors do you take into consideration in making your [career] choice”*, and *“In your job choice, what will matter most?”*, expressed the desire to be independent and able to support themselves and their family. This was both by choice and also if personal circumstances meant it was a necessity and is demonstrated in the following quotes:

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: YOUNG WOMEN AND A DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE
P1S13	<i>“I’d rather be the boss because then you can kind of just be like....like you can choose what you do.”</i>
P1S14	<i>“I want to have a job where I can be independent as well as successful. I would want to be able to buy my own house and stuff. Like, if my mum and dad broke up now my mum would not be able to support herself or us kids as she has no skills she can use. I don’t want to be like that.”</i>
P1S22	<i>“...you need money to support your family.”</i>

#### **4.2.4 Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Secondary School Students**

Questions asked during the interviews included: *“What do you think would make you happy in your job?”*, *“What will matter the most in your job?”* The key issues arising from the data are related to the more intrinsic aspects of working life, such as work enjoyment and career expectations, and the relationship between these and their individual sense of identity in the work they performed. The passion secondary school students felt toward their career of choice, and the way in which they valued money as an intrinsic, not extrinsic, motivator were factors raised consistently by this

cohort. The characteristics of the work performed was also raised, but this was in the context of balancing work and family life.

### **The Individual and Identity: Career Choice and Passion**

Work enjoyment was an issue consistently raised by the cohort to describe what they desired from work. This is demonstrated in the following quotes.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: WORK ENJOYMENT: A PASSIONATE LIFE</b>
P1S21	<i>“But I found I wouldn’t mind going for a job that pays less if it’s something I enjoy. So at the moment I’m sick of the work I’m doing [school child undertaking casual work] so that’s the most important thing for me, just getting something I enjoy, somewhere I enjoy working and actually look forward to going to work that doesn't like make me think oh work again. As long as I’m going to enjoy it and look forward to it then I don't mind that much about the pay as long as it’s not like ridiculously low. So you’ve got to balance it out but yeah, they’re the major things for me.”</i>
P1S42	<i>“..I’d be happy working for less if it’s work that I enjoy rather than something that makes me miserable.”</i>
P1S32	<i>“..like my favourite subject’s media and well I know it’s a pretty unrealistic goals because one in a million people make it, but being paid for acting that’s awesome. ”</i>
P1S33	<i>“If I could be playing a gig at a bar with 20 people that rock to midnight – I’d still be a lot happier than you know working at an office or something making more money because I wouldn’t enjoy it you know.”</i>
P1S43	<i>“I think depending on what the organisation itself does, if it does something that I’m interested in or I’m passionate about I’d definitely go there before something else.”</i>

One overwhelming theme amongst this cohort (75%) was the influence of passion in both career choice and perceived sustainability of that career. This was alluded to in the responses to questions on financial reward (to be discussed) and did not appear to differ across gender and school type.

Apart from the initial passion that many articulated for their choice of career, participants were asked what they wanted from work and would enjoy the most. Many used words such as “challenge”, “interesting”, “fun”, “happy” and “helping others” to describe the key elements to a job and career they would enjoy and want to do. The desire for challenging and interesting work was consistent across both

gender and school type, whilst a desire to help others was primarily articulated by the female participants as can be seen in the following examples.

PARTICIPANT CODE	GENDER	SCHOOL TYPE	QUOTES: ELEMENTS OF ENJOYABLE WORK
P1S11	Female	Private	"I was <b>interested</b> in school counselling and stuff and I was also <b>interested</b> in drug and alcohol counselling.....I want to <b>help other people</b> out of it [their problems]."
P1S14	Female	Private	"I want work that is creative and <b>fun</b> ."
P1S21	Female	Public	"I want something that I'm <b>happy</b> doing and something that will help me to keep growing ....like something ideally where I feel I'm contributing and I get a personal interest in the company."
P1S35	Male	Private	"...being in court and all that sort of stuff that'd be <b>fun</b> and I'd enjoy it. It would be the <b>challenge</b> – it would be like arguing with someone who actually knows their stuff which would be really <b>fun</b> ."
P1S41	Male	Public	"I want something that much more <b>challenging</b> for me, something that, well something I'm actually <b>interested</b> in, something that I actually get stuff out of and can use to the full potential instead of just mindless work – I wouldn't want a job where it's just the same thing over and over again, I want new <b>challenges</b> all the time."
P1S42	Male	Public	"..you want to go away feeling that you're not wasting your time, you want to have some sort of feeling of fulfilment out of your job. You don't want to feel you've just gone there, sort of done your thing, and thought well I'm wasting my life here – this isn't <b>making a difference</b> to anybody."

### The Value of Money: An Intrinsic Motivator

Interestingly, male more so than female secondary school students suggested money was important to maintain a family and home. Many comments related money to its ability to achieve intrinsic desires and there was a strong indication overall that intrinsic values were more important in a career. For example:

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: THE VALUE OF MONEY
P1S31	<i>‘Well my parents are very different people, I don't need money and stuff, not to say, who cares about money and that's it like, pauper people but I mean, basically you know if they're thinking go here I'll get good money and to me money isn't really the big deal, I'd rather be happy and as I say I'm sort of, whether it's cliché or hippie or whatever you want to call it but I really don't want to be.’</i>
P1S45	<i>“I reckon if you were to go for a lower paying job but one that you enjoy, as long as it's not so low paying that you're going to struggle within the family, as long as you're still going to be alright within the family, but even if its low paid, you might not have as many luxuries, I'd still go for the slightly lower paying one”.</i>
P1S36	<i>“I really don't want to end up in some job making lots of money and still just feeling sort of nowhere...I'm saying I agree with the idea of wanting to have a fulfilling life and be happy instead of just being rich and empty”.</i>
P1S44	<i>“As long as your family is supported and you've got a little pay, I'd rather have something that is satisfying like morally satisfying but obviously I don't want to compromise my family life”.</i>
P1S35	<i>“...because the point of the job is to support the family – without that you're just sort of buying crap.”</i>
P1S41	<i>“But I found I wouldn't mind going for a job that pays less if it's something I enjoy”.</i>

### Characteristics of Work

Whilst work retention was explained within the context of identity and the emotional aspects of working life, work/life balance was also cited by many participants as an important consideration in career retention.

Given the demographic profile of the participants in the first phase of the research, the results were insightful of the values regarding work and child rearing as well as the balance between work and family. Although all student participants identified a potential need and acceptance of working long hours early in their career in order to succeed, none expected to continue such work patterns once they had children/families to care for. A follow up question put to participants was: *“So if your job becomes demanding on your time, will you choose your own needs, your career, your leisure or family, or do you believe you can balance them?”* As outlined in the following quotes, a number of the female participants stated they would not work at all until their children were older (36%), whilst two others (18%)



were prepared to delay having a family until they attained work positions that allowed them to dictate their own work schedules.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>QUOTES: WORK/LIFE FAMILY BALANCE</b>
P1S13	<i>Female</i>	<i>“No, I don’t think I would [go back to work] until the kids are like 13, 14 then I might get a part-time job, but while their growing up I don’t want to not be in their lives and stuff.”</i>
P1S14	<i>Female</i>	<i>“...I’d always thought teaching would be good because like if you had kids you’d get the holidays off when they have holidays off. You’d start like just before them and finish just after them so you’ve still got a social life and stuff.”</i>
P1S15	<i>Female</i>	<i>“In psychology you kind of have to deal with other peoples’ problems so I’m OK with that but if it [starts] to affect my own family life, my own private life because I’ve been scarred by something that’s happened then I don’t want that. I just want to work ---I want to keep work at work.”</i>
P1S16	<i>Female</i>	<i>“... and keep your work at work and keep your family at home..like don’t bring your work home.”</i>

Whilst the male respondents did not indicate they would delay working or returning to work for family, a significant proportion (78%) would amend their working life and/or seek more flexibility to put their family first. These views can be observed in the following quotes.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>QUOTES: WORK/LIFE FAMILY BALANCE</b>
P1S34	<i>Male</i>	<i>“Family is first then work and then leisure would probably come in third.”</i>
P1S35	<i>Male</i>	<i>“...then I think that if it came to the choice between job and family I would always choose family because the reason I have the job is to look after my family.”</i>
P1S43	<i>Male</i>	<i>“...so you don’t really need that much [money], especially if you’re going to get \$200,000 p.a. and not spend time with your family, you might as well just get \$120,000 p.a. and then just be happy, you know what I mean?”</i>
P1S44	<i>Male</i>	<i>“... obviously I don’t want to compromise my family life.”</i>

These work/life balance decisions appeared, in part, to be influenced by their own family experiences and observations:

*'Judging by my own family, working long hours with kids just doesn't work'. (P1S15, Female)*

Flexible work arrangements were also identified as a priority across the cohort (86%), as was the need to engage in meaningful work (91%).

*'Flexibility, the job should not take up your life – do things that matter to you afford to take time off, if needed ...want to grow and learn new things all the time and feel like I am contributing... don't just go there for eight hours'. (P1S21, Female)*

Male participants suggested they would balance work and home life if their work was accommodating of an office at home or they were studying a postgraduate qualification. One quote from a male participant indicated a strong desire to balance work and family life irrespective of career:

*'I know of lots of people whose lives have been ruined like their marriages and families have broken up because this person is just spending, or these people are just spending too much time on their job. Like they're getting so far advanced in their career they have to spend so much time on the job that they can't spend enough time with their family and so the wife or the husband or whoever it may be... it's the ultimatum, either it goes or you go or you go lower in the company or whatever, or I go. And I wouldn't want it ever to come to that. This is an extreme example, for instance if I was Prime Minister and my marriage was about to break up, I'd resign. Well that's what I'm saying now, 40 years in the future if it does happen we'll see what decision I make'. (P1S44, Male)*

#### 4.2.5 Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Secondary School Students

This section discusses extrinsic career drivers in relation to career choices and aspirations of school students. The one dominant extrinsic factor considered in career choice and career retention was financial reward; however, as mentioned earlier this was deemed to be valued more as a family support mechanism than a performance based reward.

##### The Extrinsic Value of Money

A number of male school students (27% of males interviewed) indicated an appreciation for what the money from a well-paying job could buy. However, the views expressed in the following quotes indicate that a good income would provide a positive family life. The desire for extra money did not seem to be linked to wanting to lead an extravagant lifestyle, rather, it appeared to be linked to personal satisfaction – both at home and at work (as cited by P1S44 above). This supports the finding that money is considered by this cohort to be primarily seen as a ‘means to an end’, which better matches their intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations. This is highlighted by study participant P1S45 in quotes as shown below, as well as in the quotes listed in the table above.

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: THE EXTRINSIC VALUE OF MONEY
P1S45	<i>“If it’s a heck of a lot more money then I’d probably go for the money to be honest. Like a nice house, a nice car, family I want to be able to support a family”.</i>
P1S43	<i>“Like although you don’t need that much money for material life and stuff like that you’d have more money to spend on luxuries and little things that, like holidays with the family or things like that”.</i>
P1S35	<i>“I would be happy to go home and have like a really nice house and my, like, I don’t want to be like obscenely rich, like you have like a valet take you everywhere and that sort of stuff...Rather than sort of doing a job where I love it every day and then I come home and fight with my family because there’s not enough food on the table, that sort of thing”.</i>

#### 4.2.6 Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Dancers-in-Training

The findings and discussion was dominated by the focus group participants focussing on an inherent drive and passion for ballet.

### **The Individual and Identity: Career Aspirations and Passion**

In terms of career choice, all participants had already made the choice to study classical ballet. The dancers-in-training cohort consisted of school aged (14-17 years of age) participants who attended full-time professional ballet training and undertook their schooling through a Government provided distance education program. Students trained six days per week, with study breaks during the day for academic classes. The ballet training schedule was often until 8pm in the evening, so the focus groups were scheduled to fit into breaks in the evening classes. As outlined in Table 4.5, all participants had made a significant commitment to ballet training with all but one participating in dance training for at least eight years. Seventy-five per cent of the participants had been training in classical ballet for the majority of that time, whilst two had come from other dance forms, including jazz ballet and/or contemporary dance.

**Table 4.5 Dancers-in-Training Age and Years of Training**

<b>AGE OF PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>YEARS IN BALLET TRAINING (NVivo CATEGORY)</b>
15	Male	10-14
14	Female	0-4
17	Female	10-14
14	Female	10-14
14	Female	10-14
14	Female	5-9
17	Female	5-9
14	Female	5-9

The initial question to this group was therefore different to the first cohort – “*What prompted you to study ballet at such an intensive level?*” The majority indicated that studying at this level was a physical and emotional challenge but they all also stated that it was always what they had wanted to do – it was an internal drive. A major theme was ‘passion’.

The ‘Attraction to Ballet’ key category (as coded in NVivo), identifies that all of the four (4) subcategories reflect intrinsically motivated reasons for such a career aspiration: ‘Achievement and Challenge’, ‘Performing’, ‘Emotional Attachment’, and ‘Opportunities for Travel’. For example: *“Well, you get to go overseas and experience what other cultures are like and how they do things differently in their steps.”* (P1D22). The travel opportunity was skewed to learning and development in the work they performed as can be seen in the quotes below.

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: PASSION FOR BALLET
P1D11	<i>‘I’ve always danced. Like, I have done jazz and tap and basically every dance you can think of. It’s like so natural – like it’s a part of me. When I came to ballet it was like this is what I was waiting for – it’s me – it’s natural. It gives you such a natural high....It’s this unbelievable feeling of joy. When you’re dancing you feel so great it’s an unbelievable feeling. You look forward to the performing, rehearsal and the like whole enjoyment of it. It’s so exciting. I always think about performance the whole environment like’.</i>
P1D12	<i>“I’ve always had a passion for it. It was always hard wanting to dance and not having the opportunity to do it all the time like I can now”.</i>
P1D14	<i>“The thrill and the joy”.</i>
P1D16	<i>“I’ve like always had a passion for it. I’ve always wanted to dance. It’s how I’ve always felt.”</i>
P1D21	<i>“I love dancing and moving my body in different ways and performing.”</i>
P1D22	<i>“Like you want to do it everyday.”</i>

#### ***4.2.7 Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Dancers-in-Training***

The participants were posed a number of questions, which explored the issues of career retention in ballet. These included: *“Does anything about a career in ballet concern you?”*, *“What do you need to do to fulfil your career aspirations?”*, and *“How long do you think you will be able to sustain the career and why?”*.

The issues raised by the dancers-in-training replicated a number of those identified by the secondary school students as career attraction factors: passion for the work performed and issues of work and life balance. There appeared to be a realistic view of how long a career in dance is sustainable and that any decisions to leave such a career could be imposed by physical limitations such as the impact of ageing, injury

and child bearing/rearing. None of the issues raised were overtly motivated by extrinsic rewards: for example, there was no mention of pro-actively ceasing their career as a result of income, job status or financial reward issues. In addition, the issue of work/life balance though frequently raised, was not linked to workplace flexibility or conditions of employment. Discussions related to decisions to cease their career to commence child rearing were linked to the physicality of the work performed and the challenges the core duties presented to family life.

### **The Individual and Identity: Career Choice and Passion**

As with the secondary school cohort, the dancer-in-training career choices were driven primarily by an intrinsic sense of identity and self, reflecting what they wanted to do and the enjoyment they considered they would obtain from it. However, the dancers-in-training also had realistic expectations of the hardships, and whilst many of these were related to the characteristics of the work performed they still formed the core of their own identity construction. In line with these realistic expectations, a number of the participants from this cohort also demonstrated consideration of themselves within alternative careers once life as a ballet dancer was over.

#### *A Firm Grip on Reality of Life as a Dancer*

Although the passion for their craft was an overwhelming reason for their choice of career while so young, the participants also appeared to have a realistic understanding of the difficulties in achieving their dream. Injury was the critical concern and some focus group participants had already either had first-hand experience with this or were working closely with colleagues who had suffered injuries, as demonstrated in the quotes below.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: DANCING AND INJURY</b>
P1D13	<i>“If you’re injured you might like lose your motivation and like get left behind. That’s scary ‘cos when you’re injured you miss out and get left behind”.</i>
P1D14	<i>“Injury. It can be something so simple that finishes you off. Like look at XXX, she like fell on her back in contemporary and hasn’t been able to dance for like months. She was so amazing and like she now still only has like 25% movement. She will never be the way she was. She is not dancing to where we are now and she was so far ahead. Watching her in class she struggles to much and it’s hard to watch. She can’t jump and you know it hurts her”.</i>
P1D21	<i>“Injury. Because this year I’ve been injured basically the whole year so I’ve been on and off...it’s my back...that’s made it pretty difficult and I’m not sure about the long term things that dancers have to live with when they retire, like feet and knees and stuff”.</i>
P1D22	<i>“When you do things and they don’t feel right and you get worried that something bad’s happening [injury]”.</i>

Participants’ concerns regarding injuries sustained as a result of their training were directed toward being unable to continue, rather than the physical pain of the injury itself.

Participants were also clearly aware of the reality of the aspects of a ‘normal’ teenage life they were missing: relaxing, watching television, socialising and having weekends to either catch up or go to the movies, due to full-time dance training, as is demonstrated by the following quotes.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: SACRIFICES MADE FOR DANCE TRAINING</b>
P1D11	<i>“Yeh, they’re [school friends] all at home. Relaxing. Watching TV on the sofa.”</i>
P1D12	<i>“Missing out on friends – friends and time. On Sundays we have to catch up with school work.”</i>
P1D13	<i>“Yeh, all I do is dance, study, drive my car home, sleep, get up to dance. It’s hard when you get texts from your old school friends to catch up and you can’t.”</i>
P1D15	<i>“Miss out on sleep... I don’t see anyone that I went to school with.”</i>
P1D16	<i>“... like having a whole weekend – Saturday and Sunday to do what you want.”</i>
P1D21	<i>“...um the timetables, especially around performances and assessments can be taxing on you cos you might have only a few like slotted hours at the end or beginning of the day that you can do other things and most of the time that doesn’t suit people who go to school or uni or wherever – so it’s hard.”</i>

However, the respondents also demonstrated an ability to compensate for this by socialising within their limited peer group:

*“Everyone here becomes your family, like we all do everything together.” (P1D21)*

One participant responded by suggesting that she did not feel she was missing out on anything as she had her dance:

*“Not really [missing out on anything], because I think I’m doing what I want to do and it feels right for me and I feel that I’m getting everything that I need.” (P1D22)*

Clearly, the power of the passion for dance was such that she considered having this opportunity compensated for the sacrifices made.

#### **Intention to Stay: A Transient Career**

However, there was also a view that when decisions were being made to have a family this would be the time to change their career and follow another dream or goal. Many indicated a strong desire to try and stay in the dance and arts field, but others indicated they were more willing to follow another dream, examples of which are outlined in the following quotes.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: CAREER CHANGE</b>
P1D13	<i>“When I want to have kids it will be over – then I will go to uni and do something else I am passionate about”.</i>
P1D16	<i>“Maybe I would look at the sort of things I could study, look at an area and then look for something from there”.</i>
P1D21	<i>“I would like to study Psych. Even if I didn’t do it as a job, I would like to understand more about the body. Or even Physio. It would be good to do something that’s somehow related”.</i>
P1D22	<i>“I’d like it to last forever but that wouldn’t happen... I suppose I would like to do something like going to uni and studying. Like, I’ve always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher”.</i>

This indicates that these young people are not averse to risk and have the ability to consider optional careers, even when their passion for the first career – which is yet



to be fulfilled - is so intense. It also suggests, as highlighted by P1D22 above, the existence of latent career passions, interests and aspirations and a sound grasp of reality.

### **Characteristics of Work**

This cohort’s view on the impact of balancing work and family on the nature of the work performed mirrored those of the secondary school cohort.

### Work/Life Balance

There also appeared to be a more conservative view amongst the dance cohort regarding the ability to have a work/life balance in the future. They were more aware of the nature of the career they were training for and indicated that a work and life balance was not achievable. They were also comfortable with making the choice of family over ballet – to commence a family - even if it meant their career was cut relatively short. The following quotes demonstrate a strong theme running across the focus group interviews in this area, with six of the seven participants identifying issues in balancing work and family.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: WORK/LIFE BALANCE AS A CAREER DANCER</b>
P1D11	<i>“Harder for the girls because their bodies change and they have to take too long a break---like you can do other things instead of dancing but stay in the dance world”.</i>
P1D13	<i>“Would be really hard if your husband is a dancer too. Who would look after the kids?”</i>
P1D14	<i>“Yeh, it’s impossible to have your career, have kids, and then like come back. Like you will never be at the level you were at before. That would be too hard and I couldn’t do it – going backwards and like just being part of the corp and like being with dancers who have better roles who weren’t like as good as you were when you left.”</i>
P1D15	<i>“And like when you want to have kids you have to leave. Like, your body shape actually changes and when you have your break you don’t have your fitness. Too hard to try and do both”.</i>
P1D16	<i>“That’s why I’m like going to wait til I’m 30 or something so like my career is nearly over anyway and it like doesn’t matter as much”.</i>
P1D21	<i>“Dancers work until 10pm at night and it’s mostly weekends as well so that would be hard for you and the child I guess. It wouldn’t get much attention or one on time with you. It would be tough – you would need a really stable relationship with your partner to make it work”.</i>

#### **4.2.8 Comparative Analysis between the Two Key Groups**

The findings from both cohorts indicate that young people demonstrate a level of flexibility in their career choices. There is also a strong theme running through the groups, irrespective of gender, school, and cohort, of wanting to follow their passion.

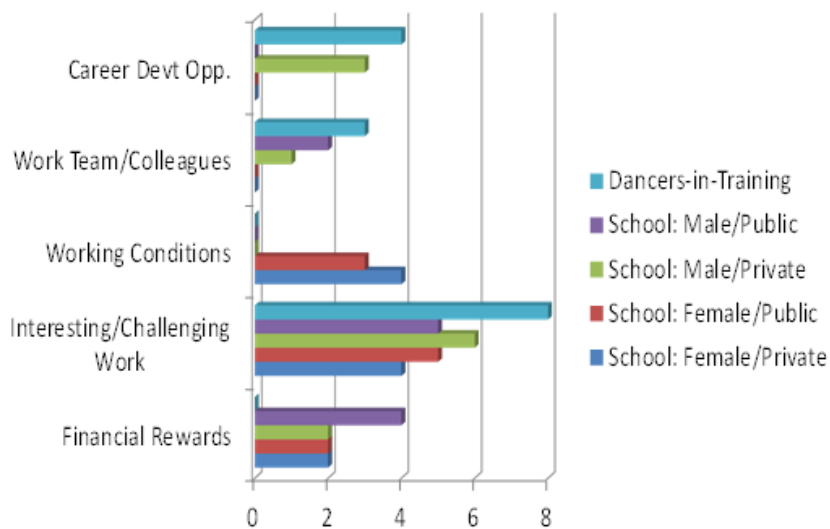
This desire also continued in participants' thoughts and discussions on career retention levers, which indicated that as long as they were enjoying their work (and in the case of the dancers, were not injured) they would stay. There was also a link between career satisfaction, retention and the peer group they worked with. This was stronger with those in dance training, possibly as they were already working with a like-minded peer group. However, it was also mentioned by one 16-year-old female participant, still in school (public/government school) and contemplating a career:

*'I think the ideal thing would be for me, at least, to be in a job where everybody you work with is at the same level as you. You know it's a team not with people with different regulations but as a team where you're all working together. There might be someone higher up than you but I wouldn't mind it if it was all at the same level and not really any promotion so to speak'. (P1S2)*

These findings support a strong linkage between intrinsic factors and the choice and sustainability of a career. Money was identified as a factor in career choice amongst a number of the male respondents in the school-based cohort, but even then, satisfaction, feedback and promotion appeared to outweigh (given the comments made by participants) this in terms of importance.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the distribution of the key retention attributes identified by both cohorts during the interviews. This figure is presented to provide the reader with a summary of the picture that arose from the interviews. The graph shows the number of times each of the retention attributes (as categorised in the graph) were mentioned, or alluded to, by Phase One participants in the focus group interviews.

**Figure 4.1 Comparative Analysis Between Both Cohorts: Career Retention Attributes (By Participant Response Rate)**



The scale at the bottom of the figure outlines the number of participants who responded to the specific career retention factors listed. The data representation that can be seen in the graph suggests that the provision of interesting and challenging work is the overwhelming factor that all participants were looking for in a satisfying career. A number of the participants used the term “satisfying work” to describe their expectations, and this was deemed to mean the same as interesting and challenging work.

Female secondary school participants ranked working conditions as their second highest factor in a career that would be satisfying and would retain them. This was mostly in the context of working hours and flexibility of work. This was not an important factor for the male secondary school participants or all the dancers-in-training. Financial reward, as previously highlighted, was an important career retention factor raised by male secondary school participants, but not by females; however, this was raised in the context of being able to provide for family. There was little aversion to changing careers to achieve a better work and life balance which poses challenges for employers who need to ensure that the investment they make in new workers is returned. These issues will be further explored in the following analysis of the results from the interviews with early career participants (Phase Two).

### **4.3 Phase Two Findings**

This section presents the findings of the second phase of data collection, and a comprehensive discussion on the categories that emerged from the open coding process and the emergent themes. Phase Two comprises early career participants in both mainstream employment and ballet companies as well as supplementary interviews with retired dancers to validate and further explore the findings from the dance cohort. Unlike the first phase, the data collection strategy consisted of both individual interviews (either face-to-face or on-line/email) and focus group interviews as outlined in Chapter Three. This approach resolved difficulties in accessing workers in groups or accessing enough ballet dancers working in Western Australia. This second phase consisted of 16 participants, as outlined in Table 4.6. The participant codes represent the phase of the study (P2 – Phase Two), the type of early career participant (E – mainstream industry; D – ballet industry), and the participant number. For example, P2E5 is a Phase Two participant, employed in mainstream industry and is participant number 5, interviewed face-to-face. The use of a participant code ‘P3’ differentiated the retired dancer respondents who were included in order to support, as well as provide a representative voice, for the findings from the dance cohort. The code ‘DT’ corresponded to those now working as dance teachers and ‘RD’ to those who had retired completely from the dance sector. The sample has been further divided to represent those who were interviewed face-to-face and those who were interviewed via email as is shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6 Phase Two Sample**

<b>PARTICIPANT CODES</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>SAMPLE SOURCE/NAME</b>	<b>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</b>
P2E1-P2E3, P2E5	Male – 3 Female - 1	Early career participants – mainstream industry: Individual interviews	4
P2E4, P2E6	Female - 2	Early career participants – mainstream industry: Email interviews	2
P2D1-P2D3	Male – 1 Female - 2	Early career participants – ballet: Individual interview	3
P2D4-P2D5	Female - 2	Early career participants – ballet: Email interview	2
P3RD1-P3RD3	Female - 3	Retired dancers – one email interview; two face-to-face interviews	3
P3DT1-P3DT2	Female – 2	Retired dancers now working as dance teachers – one email interview; one face-to-face interview	2

In order to differentiate between the supplementary interviews with retired dancers and the other participants in Phase Two, the findings from the retired dancers will be dealt with separately in Section 4.6.

### **4.3.1 Categories**

Additional categories and sub categories were developed as part of the axial coding process. A new question set was included because these participants were already working in their chosen profession. Questions included: *“What were your career aspirations at high school?”*, *“How have they changed and why?”*, *What do you enjoy most/least about your career?”*, *“Is it a career you believe can be sustained for as long as you want to pursue it? What will prevent you from doing this?”*, *“Think back to when you decided on your career and commenced training/studying. Is there anything about the career you now have that you didn’t anticipate or didn’t know about?”*, and *“What keeps you with your current employer?”*. Table 4.7 outlines the new categories developed from the initial analysis of Phase Two responses.

**Table 4.7 Key Categories: Early Career Participants**

As with Phase One, themes that emerged from the coding process included the positive and negative aspects of their current roles, career retention drivers, career sustainability, work/life balance and future career choices.

CATEGORY	MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT	BALLET COHORT
Career First Impressions	✓	
Unexpected Career Experiences	✓	✓
Career Sustainability	✓	✓
Career Success Attributes	✓	✓
Enjoy Least About Career	✓	✓
Enjoy Most About Career	✓	✓
Ballet Career Training Experiences		✓

#### ***4.3.2 Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Mainstream Industry Cohort***

The initial attractor for the participants to their current job was clearly the role and type of work being offered.

#### **The Individual and Identity: Career Aspirations and Choice**

A number of participants were part of a graduate recruitment program linked to career choice and others had sought work outside of these programs, but still within the context of career choice. However, 50% of those interviewed considered their work not to be what they had expected, or had been promised, as part of the recruitment and selection process.

#### ***4.3.3 Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Mainstream Industry Cohort***

Much of the discussion during the interviews with early career workers focussed on their current roles: what they enjoyed, did not enjoy, their career sustainability and future career choices. A number of the issues raised by participants related to their own sense of identity in their career and their unmet expectations with regard to the work performed. There was also a clear indication that work retention was based primarily upon intrinsic motivators such as work enjoyment and development opportunities. There were also a number of issues related to the characteristics of

work: a lack of initial induction support; a lack of mentorship; their capacity to manage workload, based on their current role and/or employer; and expectations of family needs in the future. Flexibility and work/life balance were also intrinsically linked to the work performed.

### **The Individual and Identity: Limited Correlation Between Career Expectation and Reality**

The findings in this discussion with mainstream early career participants suggested a sense of disillusionment with the role they were performing. This emerged from a perception that the job preview provided did not match the actual work they were undertaking. This was particularly the case with a young woman who had obtained a much sought-after graduate program position working in human resources:

*“Um, I just feel like graduates are basically brought on for cheap labour because they seem to think it’s a good way of getting us in and then kind of just get us to do whatever they want us to do and we won’t complain because we’ve got a job and everything like that.”(P2E2)*

And...

*“...I spent six months typing a name into a letter template which was very administrative....they basically ran out of work for me to do – that’s what they told me!” (P2E2)*

One participant had, after only eight months, left a position with a growing company and obtained another job on the basis of unmet job expectations, even though the new role offered less money:

*“I was doing payroll, they had nothing set up, no HR processes, nothing, so I did everything....I didn’t have any support or respect, so even though it was good money I left for here after eight months.”(P2E1)*

There also appeared to be a lack of vocational preparation provided by the tertiary educational institutions attended by study participants:

*“I’d like, you know, to do all that stuff we learned at Uni. It’s so interesting listening to case studies and examples and you think well, this is what it’s going to be like when I get out to work. I’ll be helping solve problems, investigating issues, but you get there and it’s like nothing like that”.* (P2E2)

### **Characteristics of Work**

A number of issues were raised about the actual work they performed, including the challenges of a lack of direction through limited or no induction training and mentorship. There were also issues, as reflected in the future concerns of the secondary school cohort in Phase One, regarding balancing time between work and family life.

#### *Interesting Work*

The need for the work to be interesting was highlighted in a number of different areas. For those who were positive about their current work role and career, it was the opportunity to perform the work they had trained for and/or enjoyed that retained them. Alternatively, the lack of interesting and/or fulfilling work was a reason given to explain why they least enjoy their current role and career. All participants interviewed did not demonstrate anxiety or concern about the prospect of leaving their current role to find more interesting or more compatible work:

*“If I get fed up or feel I’m not inspired anymore [I will leave]. I think there are lots of opportunities for it to be interesting for a long time – even if it’s not here. If the job doesn’t challenge me, I will simply go elsewhere. I know that must seem arrogant, but we need to be happy right?”* (P2E5)

#### *Lack of Induction Training and Support*

Two early career graduates who were recruited through formal and lengthy graduate recruitment programs were disappointed in the lack of initial and ongoing induction training and support, which lead to a less than enthusiastic view of both the company and the work they performed:



*“I just don’t think what they sold me – which was a structured graduate program – has ever ended up being a structured grad program at all. In fact, I don’t even think the grad recruitment person who employed me has every really made contact with me unless I have had an issue with something or made contact with her; so yeh... as a grad I kind of expected them to like take me under their wing and it’s not been like that.” (P2E2)*

Another participant, who worked as a Project Manager, also indicated that due to the lack of career opportunities in her current role she would look for another job once her additional study was complete.

#### *Lack of Mentorship*

One participant, who worked for a mining company, highlighted her lack of mentorship in her work as a new graduate. Interestingly, the positives of working in a young team had drawbacks:

*“..it’s a good environment but um at the same time I guess I would like it if we had some more senior people there who have been around for a while and have a bit of like...if our HR Manager was a bit older it would be great because they would be like a bit more experienced or suggest better ways of doing things.” (P2E2)*

This particular participant also faced a situation where her direct manager had left and had not been replaced, resulting in no direction or support for a period of six months. This posed difficulties for her given the short period of time she had been in the organisation in what was initially deemed an intensive learning period for two years of the graduate recruitment program.

#### *Lack of Time (“Where did all my time go?”)*

There was an element of culture shock displayed in some of the discussions (50%) with the early career workers in mainstream employment. The entry into full-time work was more difficult than they had expected, and the limited time for relaxation

and social activities proved to be challenging for them, as highlighted by a female, mainstream early career participant:

*“Full-time work. Oh my god! I struggled for about six months I reckon just like getting up to go to work, coming home, and thinking oh my god now I have to cook dinner, what, I have to wash my own clothes, what?!”*  
(P2E2)

#### Work/Life Balance

The young women interviewed suggested they would not be balancing work and family life once they commenced child rearing. The interview results indicate that the participants viewed work and family life as two separate entities and phases in their life that would not be satisfactorily merged. This resonates with the career expectations and future family life expectations of the young participants from Phase One. One female participant was already struggling with balancing work and outside commitments (studying towards further qualifications) and it was an aspect of working she had not considered:

*“There are too many overtime hours; it’s hard to study when I’m constantly being held back at work.”* (P2E4)

#### **4.3.4 Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: Ballet Cohort**

As highlighted in Table 4.7 earlier, the majority of categories identified were the same between the two early career cohorts. ‘Career First Impressions’ was not a category populated by this cohort as it was clear that – as validated by the dancers-in-training in Phase One – realistic job previews and industry exposure were part of their training process. ‘Ballet Career Training’ was clearly unique to this cohort and specifically covered the companies and countries where the participants undertook their training after initial dance training.

This cohort predominantly discussed the reasons for their career choice along with the challenges of early career life as a dancer, particularly when often working overseas. They also outlined their passion and love for the work they performed and

this outweighed the challenges such a career presented. Female participants dominated this group, as there was only one male participant, and there was considerable discussion relating to their views on work/life balance and careers after dance, as discussed below.

### **Nexus Between Work/Career Expectation and Reality**

Consensus existed amongst the participants on the nexus between work/career expectation and reality. There were few surprises regarding the work performed and the companies they worked for. For example: *“Because even when your with the school you start to perform with the company and stuff so you kind of your own little company....we went touring to Russia and stuff like that, so as you go up the levels you are leading into it.”* (P2D2). However, in two cases, family separation and the competitiveness of working as part of a company did present challenges in terms of the way they felt about themselves and working in another country:

*“...didn’t realise I would miss home so much ... in big companies you think you’re going to get more opportunities but the reality is that there’s a lot of good dancers in them and you’re more likely to get stuck in the corps.”*(P2D3)

In both cases, the participants indicated that these issues were only significant in the short-term and were considered to be part of the job settlement process.

### **4.3.5 Intrinsic Career Retention Drivers: Ballet Cohort**

The work and career issues raised by this cohort were primarily linked to retention. The key issues they were concerned about were all related to intrinsic motivation: their own sense of identity and achievement of possible selves, relationships with others, and the characteristics of the work performed. For all participants, passion for the work performed was the overriding motivator to keep working as a dancer, for all participants, for as long as their bodies allowed this. Anxiety, particularly very early in their careers, was discussed in the context of missing family. There were some issues regarding the characteristics of the work they performed: the lack of job security; competitiveness and the fear of injury. Opportunities for travel and cultural development were also raised in the context of job and self-enrichment.

### **The Individual and Identity: Career Choice and Passion**

There was an overwhelming sense of satisfaction and passion for having achieved their dream. There was a very real sense from all participants that they were lucky to be paid to do what they loved.

*“Being paid as a full-time employee to dance has always been my dream!  
And it’s only just beginning.” (P2D1)*

‘Passion’ was a word used a great deal in the interviews with ballet dancers. This feeling of passion was present in most aspects of their lives as dancers, including rehearsals, the build-up to performances and performing on stage. Two dancers cited their love and passion for the physicality of the training and performing, and the sheer hard work and sense of satisfaction at the end of a day’s work. The excitement and dedication to their work was evident in the interviews, with a strong sense of emotion exuded by the participants.

The opportunities for travel and exposure to different cultural environments were clearly a benefit for those working within ballet. This was both the case for those working for overseas companies as well as for those working in Australian companies and touring internationally:

*“It was fun, we toured, went around Tasmania performing in some really dodgy places and then some really beautiful old theatres which were awesome.” (P2D2)*

However, the benefits obtained from being exposed to different cultural environments were clearly individually focused and some participants appeared to gain more from the experience than others did. The core motivation was still the opportunity to dance, not travel, and dancing overseas was perceived to be an additional benefit.

### **Relationships**

Separation from family occurred when dancers moved interstate or overseas to obtain a position with a company. This separation anxiety, in all five cases, was short lived

– particularly in the first year of the career – and passed once they settled in. It is also clear that working colleagues became important components in a dancer’s life, often taking on the role of an extended family, thereby reducing feelings of family separation and isolation. This was raised as an issue by three of the five dancers interviewed and their feelings are highlighted in the following quotes.

PARTICIPANT CODE	QUOTES: FAMILY SEPARATION
P2D1	<i>There were parts that I absolutely hated. Um, like when I first got there I was very homesick but we moved into a great place, made friends, and then I didn't want to come home!</i>
P2D2	<i>Hated the long periods away from home.</i>
P2D3	<i>I got homesick – missed mum heaps – more so when I was injured and couldn't work.</i>

This is primarily an intrinsic motivation issue as it stems from a need for belonging and support - an internal emotional need.

### **Characteristics of Work**

Issues related to the precarious nature of funding in the dance industry itself, as well as concerns regarding injury and competition for roles, were cited by the dancers as the main concerns for the longevity of their careers.

### Lack of Job Security

Job security was raised as an issue mainly for those performing in either regional and/or smaller Australian companies or overseas (two participants), where funding and contracts were short-term and/or work was precarious. All participants were aware that this was part of life as a career dancer. They indicated that short-term contracts were the norm, particularly with overseas companies. Regardless, they always hoped that contracts would be extended. For example:

*“... was really disappointed when I was training with Heinz Bosl Stiftung [a dance company in Munich] that I didn't successfully gain a contract before my student Visa expired.” (P2D4)*

### Injury

Injuries were highlighted as a major concern for dancers and this issue was often linked to competitiveness:

*“I got an injury. A stress fracture! So I had to come home. Overuse! I kept dancing on it. As you do, because you have this constant fear that if you have an injury that you will lose your place, you know, lose your parts, so you keep going, which is stupid because you end up making it worse in the long run.” (P2D3)*

This dancer broke an ankle bone as a result of continuing to dance on an injury, but was determined to continue her career as a ballet dancer and remain with the company.

### Competitiveness/Resilience

This appeared to be individually based and some participants were more sensitive to competition for roles and the need for ‘perfection’. However, all participants recognised a gender bias, with competition for roles being more of an issue for females than males; this is due to the availability of places in proportion to the number of female dancers competing for them. There also appeared to be a sense that this competitive culture was perpetuated by the staff and mentors training the dancers, rather than by the dancers themselves. The following quotes from four of the five dancers highlight this.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>QUOTES: COMPETITIVENESS</b>
P2D1	<i>Rejection is always a big thing in ballet.</i>
P2D2	<i>They would try and sideline some people and not others and it all became about who was the favourite and who wasn't and who was the flavour of the day. I hated all that stuff and hated how [they] would play those games.</i>
P2D3	<i>Its competitive too – I knew that growing up in a ballet family but I suppose I was a tall poppy here in Perth – pretty good – you know, big fish in a small sea I suppose. But I got over there and there's all these great dancers who have been with the company a while – it's a big company – so the chances of getting anywhere above the corps is pretty remote. That's hard.</i>
P2D4	<i>Fierce competition!</i>

Competitiveness appeared to influence not only participants' initial responses to working in a company, but also their longer-term retention. However, in all cases participants indicated that they needed to learn to adjust and "grow a thicker skin" to deal with it, rather than leave the job. Competitiveness was positioned as a cultural issue within ballet companies. Participants sought either to accept or ignore the competitiveness, considering it to be part of the role.

#### ***4.3.6 Comparative Analysis Between the Phase Two Cohorts***

A high level of congruence between the two cohorts of early career participants (from mainstream industry and ballet) was found only in the area of perceptions regarding work/life balance. Difference, which dominated, was found in the early career experiences regarding career expectations and aspirations being met. There was also difference between these cohorts in what early career workers enjoyed and disliked about the work they performed.

##### **Work/Life Balance**

Both cohorts reported an overwhelming lack of support for combining work and family life. The views of those young people yet to enter the workforce (Phase One) and those who were now in their chosen career (Phase Two) were similar with regard to concerns about working when married with children. In fact, the young women in the workforce strongly reinforced the views of the young women who participated in Phase One. These women believed the personal losses outweighed the gains of attempting to balance work and family life. In the minds of the participants, flexible career opportunities did not appear to either exist in the workplace; or, if they did, they were not deemed attractive enough to elicit a change in work. There was also a high level of congruence between the participants in Phases One and Two regarding the time constraints that would exist in balancing work and family life.

##### **Career Expectation and Reality**

The early career graduates working in mainstream industry demonstrated a significant level of disillusionment with the career promises made by employers. The participants had, on the whole, experienced a lack of congruence between career expectation and reality. The most cited reasons for this were an unrealistic or insufficient job preview, lack of induction support once they commenced and lack of

mentorship. The key words highlighted by the secondary school students in Phase One, which characterised a good career and desires to stay in the job, were “challenge”, “fun”, “interesting” and “happy”. These were not part of the vocabulary of those who were now early career graduates.

Within the ballet cohort there appeared to be a greater congruence between career expectation, the actual job preview and career. Professional ballet dancers appeared more prepared for the challenges their career had for them. This preparation was provided through comprehensive and realistic insights about working life gained from their ballet training as well as from their exposure to existing and retired dancers, and opportunities for participation in summer schools and tours/workshops at companies (both nationally and internationally) as part of their training program. This level of preparation for a career in dance was echoed by the comments of the dancers-in-training in Phase One.

#### **Career Insights: Negative Aspects**

The negative factors each cohort raised about the work performed were very different. As can be seen from Table 4.8, the mainstream industry cohort discussed primarily the type of work they were doing and the lack of exposure to what they thought they were going to be doing. On the other hand, the dancers appeared to enjoy their work as it fulfilled their dreams. For this cohort, the negatives were associated with more externalised extrinsic factors such as separation from family (although this also had intrinsic implications for their early career experiences as outlined in Section 4.3.5), competition between dancers and short-term contracts. One participant indicated that the poor pay and short-term contracts made it difficult to continue to work and live overseas, precipitating a decision to move back to Australia to work. Table 4.8 provides a ranking of the attributes identified by participants as least enjoyable.



**Table 4.8 Percentage\* of Least Enjoyable Career Attribute Comparison**

LEAST ENJOYABLE CAREER ATTRIBUTES: MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT	LEAST ENJOYABLE CAREER ATTRIBUTES: BALLET COHORT
1. Job Tasks (50%)	1. Family separation (40%)
2. Boredom (33%)	2. Competitiveness (40%)
3. Leadership responsibilities (33%)	3. Injury (40%)
4. Politics (organisational) (33%)	4. Limited contracts (40%)
5. Staff management responsibilities (17%)	5. Teacher attitude (20%)
6. Lack of mentors (17%)	6. Loss of independence (20%)
7. Workload (17%)	7. Poor pay (20%)

\*As a percentage of the least enjoyable career attributes as discussed by participants in all interviews conducted.

The table indicates that early career mainstream industry participants link 71% of their least enjoyable career attributes to the job itself: work tasks, boredom, staff management and leadership responsibilities, and workload. This could be due to the greater variation in duties performed in this cohort compared to the ballet dancers, or to a lack of work preparedness expressed by early career participants:

*“That’s where I have sort of learnt over the past six months that graduates are basically employed to be sort of like administrators. Especially in HR, but maybe that’s just the company I’m working for.”*  
(P2E2)

Dancers link only one of their least enjoyable career attributes to the job itself: injury. This, however, is a job risk factor rather than an actual attribute of the work performed that they least enjoy. There is also a high level of preparedness for this work ‘hazard’ demonstrated by all participants as discussed in Section 4.3.5.

#### **Career Insights: Positive Aspects**

The key positive factors associated with the work performed by Phase Two participants are outlined in Table 4.9. As can be seen, dancers most enjoy the ability to dance, which is their passion! As one dancer stated, the most enjoyable aspect of

the work was to “*be paid to do what I love*” (P2D1). Clearly, the actual core job tasks performed were the most enjoyable aspect of the role. In comparison, mainstream industry participants identified no single overriding most enjoyable career attribute. Certainly, the people they worked with, career development opportunities and job tasks rated highly; however, job tasks were also identified as the least enjoyable aspects of the career. On the other hand, dancers appeared to thoroughly enjoy the physicality of their work, ranging from daily warm ups, rehearsals and performing, linking this satisfaction to the core job tasks. Opportunities for travel also rated highly whilst it was not acknowledged as critical to work enjoyment for mainstream early career participants.

**Table 4.9 Percentage of Most Enjoyable Career Attribute Comparison**

<b>MOST ENJOYABLE CAREER ATTRIBUTES: MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT</b>	<b>MOST ENJOYABLE CAREER ATTRIBUTES: BALLET COHORT</b>
1. People work with (50%)	1. Dancing every day (100%)
2. Job tasks (33%)	2. Paid for what I love (60%)
3. Career Development (33%)	3. Travel (40%)
4. Mentor (33%)	4. Physicality (40%)
5. Industry (33%)	5. People work with/friendships (20%)

The table suggests that the core job tasks associated with a career in ballet form the basis of overall satisfaction with the job. Dancers all rate dancing every day – the core job task – as their most enjoyable career attribute. It is clear that the passion identified for the job is transferred to performance of the job:

*“Just the chance to be able to do what I’ve loved and trained for my whole life, you know, it’s just part of me and it’s what I want.” (P2D5)*

Conversely, the diverse nature of the work tasks performed by the mainstream industry cohort led to a broader range of factors linked to satisfaction with the work. Being paid for what they love ranked second (60%) amongst the ballet cohort, and discussions during the interviews suggest that this is not extrinsically motivated by the money, but reaffirms that they feel ‘lucky’ to be able to sustain themselves doing

what they love. The ranking of physicality of the work (40%) by the dancers also supports the intrinsic nature of the work enjoyment.

Career satisfaction for the participants in mainstream industry career roles were linked to relationships with others, people they work with being the most enjoyable (50%) and having mentors (33%). The two participants who ranked their industry as providing an enjoyable career both worked in the mining sector. None of the mainstream industry participants ranked working in their present company/organisation as a positive attribute, despite earning above the mean for new graduates.

Among the ballet cohort, only one participant rated colleagues as a critical aspect for enjoying the role. This participant found that the friends made whilst dancing overseas (as their first professional job in ballet) helped overcome feelings of family separation. In this case, the friendship existed outside the context of the job. Opportunities to travel and experience different cultures ranked highly (40%) for participants, with the cultural aspects being a highlight:

*“Like when I went to Europe with X it just opened my eyes, like Europe for me was just like “Oh my god!” Like, all this art and history, I just loved all the architecture, I just fell in love with the whole European arts scene. You know, everything was stimulating for me, not just the dance or ballet. It opened my eyes up to a whole world of art I didn’t know existed.” (P2D2)*

#### **4.4 Job Retention Checklist**

As outlined in Chapter Three (section 3.3.2), all participants were asked to rank a checklist of job retention factors according to their own sense of priority. The twenty items on the checklist ranged from ‘1’ for the most important retention factor to ‘20’ for the least important. There was also a box to enable a check against ‘Other’ with an opportunity to insert a different choice. However, no participants utilised this option.

Table 4.10 represents a collation of the results of the ten most important retention factors, from the job retention checklist, ranked from most important, for both the Mainstream Industry and Ballet Cohorts.

**Table 4.10 Job Retention Rankings**

<b>RANKING</b>	<b>MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT</b>	<b>BALLET COHORT</b>
1	Interesting work	Passion for job
2	Development opportunities	Self-fulfilment
3	Passion for job	Creativity opportunities
4	Promotion opportunities	Interesting work
5	Work colleagues	Challenge
6	Challenge	Travel
7	Money	Flexibility
8	Work hours	Development opportunities
9	Leaders/mentors	Control/autonomy over work
10	Team work	Work environment

The dispersion of data (level of agreement on the rankings for each of the job retention factors) was wider for the mainstream industry cohort, reflecting a higher level of congruence and consensus of job retention factors among the ballet cohort. There was a higher degree of consensus amongst the ballet cohort as to what constituted the most important factors keeping them with their employer.

The retention items with the most variation in agreement amongst the mainstream industry cohort related to control or autonomy over work and the role of money. The most variation in agreement amongst the ballet industry cohort was also money and work colleagues. This suggests that early in their careers young workers place very different values on money, often determined by their personal situations. It also suggests that control over work and relationships with work colleagues are perceived very differently amongst the participants. Table 4.11 provides a brief comparative summary of the key retention issues.

**Table 4.11 Top Five Job Retention Factors**

<b>TOP FIVE: MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT</b>	<b>TOP FIVE: BALLET DANCER COHORT</b>
1. Interesting work	1. Passion for the job
2. Development opportunities	2. Self-fulfilment
3. Passion for the job	3. Creativity opportunities
4. Promotion Opportunities	4. Interesting Work
5. Work Colleagues	5. Challenge

The shaded areas represent the areas of agreement between the two core cohorts. The highest level of consensus amongst a cohort is shaded in the darker blue - “Passion for the job”. Among the ballet cohort interesting work and passion for the job rank highly between both cohorts, reflecting a high level of congruence as to the importance of intrinsic work value. It is also interesting to note that passion for the job is a critical element of all work performed by young people, and not just those employed in the arts, as is demonstrated in the top five ranked items of both cohorts.

The remaining top ranked job retention factors reflect the specific nature of the career and/or industry. The ballet cohort rated creativity, self-fulfilment and challenge as critical success factors for careers in the arts. The mainstream industry cohort ranked development and promotional opportunities followed by work colleagues, identifying the importance of training, development and succession planning amongst this cohort. Relationships with colleagues was important to career satisfaction for the graduate industry cohort, along with interesting work. The core work duty of dance represented the higher level of career satisfaction amongst the ballet industry cohort. Table 4.12 provides a brief comparative summary of the least important job retention issues.

**Table 4.12 Least Important Job Retention Factors**

<b>BOTTOM FIVE: MAINSTREAM INDUSTRY COHORT</b>	<b>BOTTOM FIVE: BALLET DANCER COHORT</b>
20. Image/status	20. Image/status
19. Creativity Opportunities	19. Company ethics/values
18. Travel	18. Money
17. Company Ethics/Values	17. Promotion Opportunities
16. Recognition	16. Recognition

For both cohorts, the need for image/status, company ethics/values and recognition were the lowest ranked job retention factors. The darkest shade of blue represents the highest level of agreement amongst the two cohorts: “Image/Status”. The second least important retention factor is “Company ethics/values” and the third is “Recognition”.

Image and status was the lowest ranked job retention factor for both cohorts. The rating of company values and ethics in the bottom five also indicates that company values and mission statements are clearly not important for young workers – the actual work performed is more important. Money and promotional opportunities were also ranked in the bottom five for the ballet cohort, reflecting the focus on the work performed. The mainstream industry cohort did not rate opportunities for the use of creativity as important. This could be explained by participants’ interpretation of what creativity meant to them, and also that during an intensive on-the-job learning curve it was not important. Opportunities to travel were also considered unimportant at this stage in the careers of the young mainstream industry cohort.

Interestingly, recognition was not considered an important retention factor for either of the cohorts. This may be due to the early nature of careers and that learning on-the-job was more important than recognition for work done. The top five retention factors support this finding, as does the fact that the mainstream industry cohort list development opportunities as the second most important retention factor.

## **4.5 Comparative Analysis Between Phases One and Two**

Whilst the issues raised by the four cohorts from Phases One (secondary school students and dancers-in-training) and Two (early career participants from the mainstream industry and ballet sectors) are explored in more detail in Chapter Five, an overview of the key findings between the two groups is discussed in this section in order to summarise key areas of congruence and/or difference in career attraction and retention motivators. As discussed earlier, the supplementary interviews from the retired dancers will be discussed in Section 4.6.

### ***4.5.1 Career Attraction***

The main issue that emerged between the two phases in the study is the nexus between career aspiration, expectation and reality. There was a considerable difference between the secondary school and mainstream industry cohorts, in their level of congruence between work expectation and reality, whereas this was far less so for the dancers-in-training and ballet cohorts. The data suggests much of this is related to work preparedness through realistic job previews.

#### **Realistic Job Previews**

The high level of congruence between work/career expectation and work reality for the ballet cohort appears to occur because the work performed provided no ‘surprises’ to the ballet participants. External factors such as family separation were the cause of some anxiety for them. The data indicates that opportunities to train full-time in a ballet setting, along with daily exposure to existing and retired dancers, provided a realistic preview of the careers they would be undertaking. There was also clear alignment between the training they received and the work they were undertaking.

The early career participants in mainstream industry, on the other hand, had mixed responses regarding the work tasks they were performing, with 50% suggesting that work tasks were the least enjoyable aspects of their jobs. Issues such as lack of mentorship, training and boring repetitive work lead to a level of frustration for many participants. Two respondents were frustrated by their lack of exposure to the type of work they were seeking and had been trained for. These particular participants

had been successful applicants from an extensive graduate recruitment program that promised a more comprehensive insight into the job roles. This lack of congruence between the previews and the actual work performed had implications for job retention for the mainstream industry cohort.

#### **4.5.2 Career Retention**

A number of similarities emerged between the cohorts in the two phases, particularly with regard to participants' views on work passion, interest and work/life balance. However, passion for the work performed was more significant for future career planning and job retention for the ballet dancers than for the mainstream industry cohort.

##### **Passion for the Work/Career**

Passion was a key element of career choice for both cohorts in Phase One of the study. Although this passion was still mentioned across both cohorts in Phase Two, it was more consistent within the ballet industry cohort. The mainstream industry cohort displayed differing levels of satisfaction with their careers, as demonstrated in Table 4.9: 50% enjoyed work tasks the least in their career, as against the ballet industry cohort who had 100% agreement. This suggested that being paid for what they loved was the most enjoyable aspect of their career. The ballet industry cohort demonstrated close alignment between work expectation and reality. This assisted in 'igniting' and continuing their passion. Much of the dissatisfaction among the mainstream industry cohort was associated with unmet job previews resulting in a dislike of their actual job content, a lack of mentorship, and a perception of limited career development opportunities.

##### **Work/Life Balance**

Phase One and Two participants had a pessimistic view of work/life balance and believed it was either unachievable and that family would take precedence. However, such a choice (family roles taking precedence over work) was stronger amongst the female participants, indicating a more conservative view on child care and rearing, with participants opting for staying at home with younger children instead of attempting to balance work and family. A number of Phase One participants drew on family experiences and observations to identify what they saw



as real difficulties in balancing the two (such as long hours at work and not being home for children/s needs); Phase Two participants based their judgement on the nature of their work and working conditions.

These findings were reinforced by the results from the job retention checklist completed by Phase Two participants. Clearly, meeting work/career aspirations and expectations was critical to these participants, as was the achievement of their possible selves. The job retention checklist results also indicated that extrinsic factors were least likely to retain these individuals. Factors such as money and image/status appeared as the least important job retention items.

#### **4.6 Phase Two: Supplementary Interviews with Retired Dancers**

Due to the specialist nature of ballet as an occupation, and the limited literature available about dance as a career choice, interviews were also conducted with retired dancers. These participants were ‘experts’ who had trained and performed as professional dancers and as a result had extensive experience and insights into the sector. They were able to comment on the findings from the ballet cohort in Phases One and Two and also provided a representative voice for this under-researched industry sector. This sample included five participants’: three individual interviews and two email interviews.

Questions with this supplementary group explored participants’ own views, as well as those expressed by participants in Phases One and Two of the study. Interviews encompassed careers in ballet, including likes, dislikes and reflections on attributes required for young dancers to succeed. Responses were compared to the expectations and views expressed by the dancers-in-training (Phase One) and early career dancers (Phase Two). Participants were also asked about career sustainability and issues related to work/life balance. As such, these participants provided a representative and longer-term insight into ballet as a career, and validation of the data from the young people and early career workers in Phases One and Two.

#### 4.6.1 Insights into a Professional Ballet Career

These participants had all danced professionally for a significant proportion of their career. They were unanimous in their reflections in stating that they loved their careers as dancers and, as a result had remained connected to ballet, either as dance teachers or in a management role. All but one had pursued further studies to gain qualifications leading to a different career within the arts.

These participants provided some valuable insights into the careers they had as dancers, as can be seen in the following quotes.

<b>PARTICIPANT CODE</b>	<b>WHAT THEY LOVED ABOUT CAREER</b>	<b>WHAT THEY DISLIKED ABOUT CAREER</b>
P3RD1	<i>I adored the performing and travelling. I was a soloist sometimes and we had lots of choreographers coming in and working with us. I really loved it actually. Really enjoyed it.</i>	<i>You don't get any positives [from teachers] and it's funny because in hindsight I wish I'd dealt with things differently and not been so self-critical and taken things so personally.</i>
P3DT1	<i>The passion! I loved and still love dancing! I loved doing it, I loved learning it, I loved the costumes, the smiles, the hard work and the rehearsals.</i>	<i>The hours were often crazy, particularly with performances and rehearsals...also the pressure of my self perfectionism.</i>
P3RD2	<i>Met a lot of great people from around the world, made great friends, and daily enjoyment of what I did.</i>	<i>The continuous rejection – you need to develop a thick skin!</i>
P3RD3	<i>Loved the dance, the performing, the travelling. Touring, rehearsals, the buzz of performing...</i>	<i>I'd never been away from home before so um it was tough.</i>

Clearly, the passion for what they were doing had been the most enjoyable aspect of their dance work. As with the early career dancers in Phase Two, one retired dancer reiterated that it was “*fantastic to be paid to do what I loved*”, and another remarked that “*the decision to dance is pretty much made for you by your heart and your body.*” The opinions voiced by these retired dancers tended to be external to the actual job – it was more to do with the working conditions and treatment by mentors. Hindsight appeared to be useful in how the dancers would deal with criticisms

differently now (as highlighted by the quotes from two of the four retired dancers listed above).

When asked what they missed about dancing, responses were focussed on how it made them feel, both physically and mentally: For example; *“I miss the physicality of it”* and *“I do miss dancing for myself, I can feel my body isn’t as strong as it used to be and it’s frustrating when I can’t perform the way I used to.”*(P3DT1)

#### **4.6.2 Dancing as a Career Today**

Feedback from this phase also validated the concerns expressed by early career dancers. Competition for jobs and roles were outlined as a psychological and emotional challenge for young dancers. The respondents also considered that dancing was now more physical than it used to be and that dancers had to learn more styles and techniques in order to be employable, and this in turn placed increased stress on the body. One participant indicated that young dancers needed to learn about looking after their bodies to reduce injury:

*“They also need to be intelligent to some extent...dancers need to be smart about the way they use their bodies and understand how they work.”* (P3DT1)

Expense was also an issue for young dancers. Dance is an expensive pursuit, particularly given increases in the cost of living globally and the fact that wages are still extremely low for ballet dancers. The lack of scholarships to be able to launch a ballet career overseas was also cited as an issue affecting the achievement of career aspirations for young dancers. Two participants cited the lack of dance opportunities and professional ballet companies within Australia as a concern for the future sustainability of dancers’ careers and training:

*“That’s what’s hard here in Australia – we don’t have a dedicated ballet school as such where you can do normal school lessons with normal classes and teachers and then train each day too.”*(P3DT2)

And...

*“Australia needs more funding, more companies, more jobs, more support programmes.” (P3RD2)*

It was a unanimous view of the retired dancers that dancers had to ensure they gained a complete secondary school education to provide them with greater opportunities to follow different career pursuits and education once their dance careers were over.

#### **4.6.3 Work/Life Balance**

With regard to balancing a dance career and family, participants’ views were congruent with the dancers-in-training and early career dancers from Phases One and Two. The dancers remarked that it was difficult to balance a family’s needs with the hours they worked, particularly with rehearsals and performing. A number also supported the concerns of the Phase One and Two ballet cohort participants and agreed it would be difficult to maintain their bodies in the peak condition required to perform well after pregnancy and childbirth. One retired dancer reported that she had given up her dancing career in order to commence a family, as she felt she would not be able to do both.

#### **4.6.4 Career Sustainability**

Whilst respondents conceded that some dancers can continue performing into their 40s and 50s (Martha Graham, a famous American ballet dancer, who danced and choreographed for over seventy years, was cited as an example), this was the exception to the rule; most considered that if dancers are still working in their 30s they are ‘doing well’. This is where the need for a future career plan and educational opportunities were raised as a necessity for all young dancers.

### **4.7 Conceptual Framework**

The findings support the literature findings in relation to the motivators for career attraction and retention. The data collected from the core cohorts in both Phases One and Two provides evidence that career choice, attraction and retention is largely intrinsically motivated. The psychological constructs of achieving possible self and career calling, primarily determine the key reasons supporting career choice and aspiration. This is stronger amongst the ballet cohort but is also evident amongst the

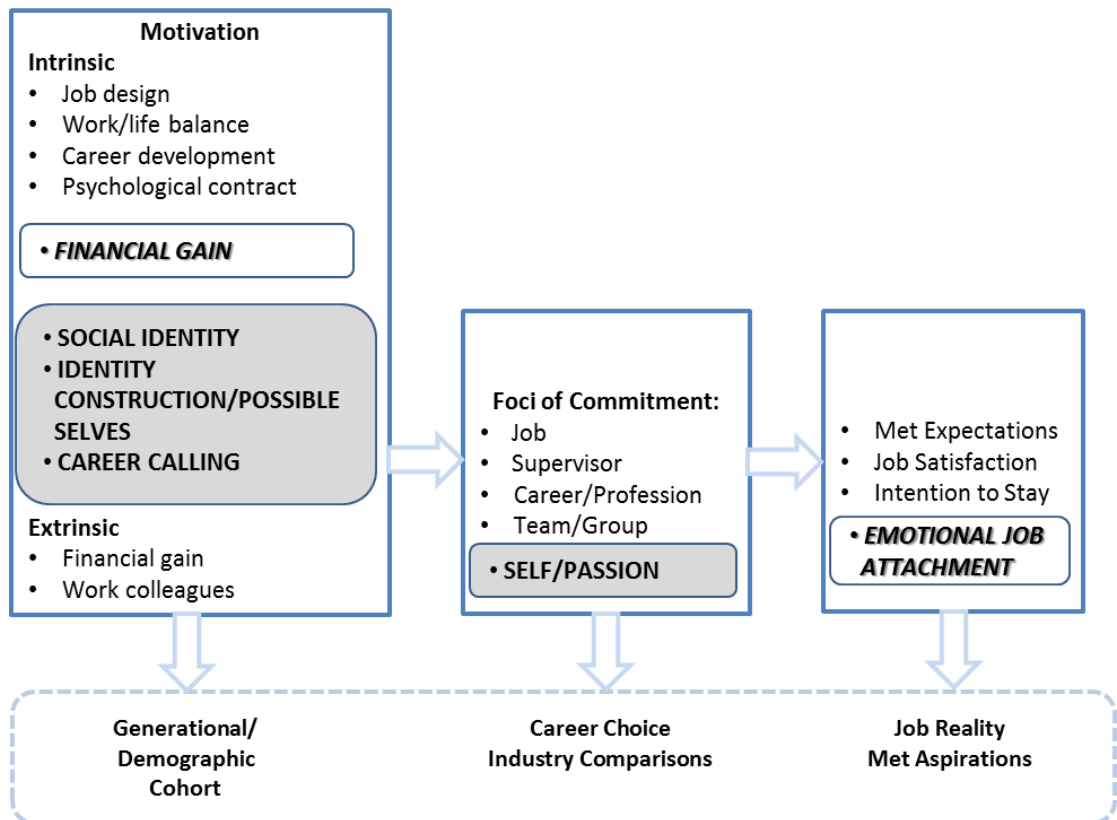
secondary school students and early career participants in mainstream industry. Career retention is also intrinsically driven, with the design of the job (interesting and enjoyable work), opportunities for career support and development, and congruence between work expectations, job promises and reality (psychological contract) as critical elements. Extrinsic motivators linked to financial gain and work colleagues were evident, but these were aligned to intrinsic motivators, with money providing family support and work colleagues providing emotional support on the job.

The majority of the participants in Phase One of the study had already made career choices and identified work expectations, suggesting strong alignment with the identity construction and possible self literature. The impact on job satisfaction and commitment is significant because it supports the inclusion of a self/passion construct in the Foci of Commitment Framework. The analysis of the Phase Two data also provided evidence to support literature findings related to work and career commitment and met expectations, increased job satisfaction and higher job retention.

The data adds a further dimension to the literature in providing evidence of emotional work attachment as a result of achieving possible selves, a passion for the work performed and met expectations. This was more evident with the ballet cohort where work attachment was clearly emotional and intention to leave was largely the result of an inability to perform due to factors such as injury, or the decision to become pregnant and/or raise a family. However, this was also evident amongst the mainstream industry cohort in Phase Two, where work dissatisfaction and decisions to leave resulted from unmet work expectations and the inability to achieve their possible self or career aspirations (career calling). This is clearly an emotional work attachment issue impacting job retention decisions.

As a result of the findings from the two phases of the research, the literature framework developed at the conclusion of Chapter Two was revised and expanded. These revisions are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 Conceptual Framework**



**Note:**

1. Areas highlighted in capitals and bold in a grey background are new linkages drawn from the literature and outlined in Chapter Two.
2. Additions to the conceptual framework that have emerged from the data analysis are highlighted in capitals, bold and italics ('Financial gain' as an intrinsic motivator in the box on the left and "Emotional Job Attachment" in the outcome box on the far right).

## 4.8 Conclusions

This chapter has presented the findings from the two phases of the data collection process; this incorporates focus group interviews, individual face-to face interview and electronic interview results. The findings address the key research question *“What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?”*, as well as the sub questions within the education and work contexts of the participants.

The two research phases generated a significant volume of qualitative data, which was analysed utilising a range of qualitative techniques including categorisation, axial coding and re-coding to build the key emergent themes, detailed descriptions

and quotes for each theme. NVivo was utilised to support data storage, build thematic nodes, tabulate frequency responses, link data in nodes to specific cases, highlight memorable quotes and develop demographic profiles.

These findings were initially presented by phase, which allowed for a detailed analysis of the data and emergent themes for each cohort of respondents. Next, a comparative analysis of the two phases was undertaken to determine areas of correlation or difference. This allowed a clear picture to emerge of the career aspirations of youth in divergent industries as well as areas of congruence between these aspirations/expectations and career realities. An additional data set of retired dancers was included in Phase Two to explore the findings of the first two phases of the ballet cohort and to provide a representative voice for this specialised industry sector.

The key findings in this chapter include:

#### ***4.8.1 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers – Phase One***

- The provision of interesting and challenging work was the overwhelming factor that all Phase One participants were seeking in a satisfying career;
- Secondary school students had firm ideas on career choices and these were primarily driven by a need to perform work that was fulfilling and they were passionate about;
- Those most unsure about future career choices were males from government/public schools;
- Views on career retention amongst the secondary school participants was driven by primarily intrinsic factors such as work enjoyment and meeting career expectations;
- Work/life balance was a key element in future career retention decisions, with 100% of female and 78% of male secondary school students suggesting substantial changes to their working conditions and careers to accommodate family needs;
- Financial gain was positioned as a ‘means to an end’ with this reward satisfying intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations;

- Dancers-in-training made significant career decisions very early in life, primarily driven by an innate passion for ballet; and had an accurate and realistic understanding of the rigours of life as a professional ballet dancer;
- All female dancers-in-training considered that balancing work and family life was not an option and that careers would cease once parenting decisions were made; and
- A significant proportion of dancers-in-training had latent career choices already made for when their ballet careers were over.

#### ***4.8.2 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers – Phase Two***

- The ability to work in a career that was intrinsically fulfilling and enjoyable was the key career attraction and retention driver for all Phase Two participants;
- Early career participants representing the mainstream industry were generally disillusioned with the roles and considered that there was a lack of congruence between the career expectation and reality;
- Those who participated in graduate recruitment programs with the mining sector demonstrated the most significant gaps in job previews and work reality;
- Poor job induction, training and support, mainly through limited mentoring and support, were cited as reasons for heightened intentions to leave on behalf of mainstream industry participants;
- Ballet dancers indicated no lack of congruence between career expectation and reality, citing clear insights being provided throughout their lengthy training experiences;
- Dancers remained passionate about their careers and considered themselves fortunate to be paid to do something they loved and were passionate about; and
- Decisions to leave dance careers were dictated by concerns regarding injury and desire to commence child rearing.



#### ***4.8.3 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers: Phase Two Retired Dancers***

- The retired dancers supported the findings from the ballet cohort in Phases One and Two in reiterating that the key attraction was the ability to work in a career that was intrinsically fulfilling and enjoyable. This was also the retention driver that sustained them;
- The retired dancers reported that their retirement from dance due to either injury or the decision to start a family. This supported the findings of the dance participants in Phases One and Two;
- The retired dancers had expected a short career and whilst still dancing had planned for other careers in the dance and/or arts sector; and
- The retired dancers highlighted the importance of completing secondary education and/or training in order to develop and pursue careers outside of dancing at a later stage in life.

The following chapter will draw further conclusions regarding the data analysis and findings, outline the limitations of this study, and discuss the implications that provide guidance for practitioners and future researchers.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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*True success is not just getting what you want in life – it's liking what you get."*

(Hall & Chandler 2005, 173).

### 5.0 Introduction

This research sought to answer the following central research question:

*"What are the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice?"*

The attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice as well as the key similarities and differences in career aspirations and work experiences between the two distinct cohorts of young people are discussed in this chapter.

In addition to the central research question, the following sub questions were included:

1. What are the career aspirations and drivers of career choice amongst two distinct cohorts of school-aged youth?
2. What are the work experiences and retention drivers of two distinct cohorts of early career workers?
3. What can the key similarities and differences between the two distinct cohorts of young people tell us about youth career aspirations and work experiences?

The previous chapters covered the context and background to the study, the literature review, a description of the methodology employed and the analysis and findings of the two research phases. This Chapter discusses the overall findings, presents

research implications and opportunities and states the conclusions. Table 5.1 outlines the structure of the chapter.

**Table 5.1 Chapter Five Structure**

5.1	Career attraction and retention drivers for young people
5.2	Intrinsic and extrinsic career attraction drivers
5.3	Intrinsic and extrinsic career retention drivers
5.4	Organisational commitment and a new model for foci and bases of commitment
5.5	Ballet as a career choice
5.6	Congruence between career expectation and work reality
5.7	Career success
5.8	Study limitations
5.9	Future research opportunities: Contributions to theory and practice
5.10	Conclusions

## **5.1 Career Attraction and Retention Drivers for Young People**

The purpose of the key research question was to determine the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice. This is a critical issue globally, and although it has received much attention in the literature, little research has been conducted to identify the career attraction and retention drivers themselves. The key findings of this research indicate that young people make career choices and decisions early, and this has a significant impact upon their career attraction and retention. It was also found that career choice was intrinsically driven, with choices founded upon young peoples' exploration of identity and possible selves. Choices were often associated with a passion for the type of work young people wanted to perform and, particularly in the case of ballet, with a career calling or sense of vocation.

Career aspirations and choices amongst young people were influenced by gender, school type (public vs private) and the quality of career guidance and counselling offered. For the early career cohort, career retention had little to do with the achievement of financial rewards. There was also evidence that dancers-in-training and early career dancers held, retrospectively, latent career choices and plans and a higher level of integration between work expectation and reality. This was more evident amongst the dance cohort than other participants. The key retention factors

for all participants focussed on the intrinsic factors that linked to successfully fulfilling aspirations and passions. The following sections discuss in more detail these research findings and their links to the literature.

## **5.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers**

The research findings suggest the attraction drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice are primarily influenced by their own sense of identity and the achievement of their possible selves. Once employed, the retention of these young workers was also influenced by the intrinsic characteristics of the work performed, particularly their involvement in interesting work and the achievement of a work and life balance. Career aspirations and expectations, for those both cohorts in Phases One and Two, were firmly embedded within the constructs the participants' own identity construction and possible selves.

### ***5.2.1 Intrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: The Individual and Identity***

The findings suggest that career attraction is often formed early, with 82% of the participants in secondary education already making clear decisions regarding career choices and paths. The dancer-in-training cohort had mostly made their decision to follow a career in ballet during their primary schooling years, and this had significant implications for secondary schooling and their social lives. This was not unique to the dancers; a number of the participants in the secondary school cohort also articulated that their career path was driven by a passion or calling. Decisions, by at least three of the 30 secondary school-aged participants, were made irrespective of parents' wishes, whilst all of the remaining participants alluded to fulfilling their own dreams and aspirations as the primary drivers for career decisions. Previous research has suggested that career decisions by adolescents are the result of parental influences. This remains a factor in some career decision making; however, it is far from the only determinant of such decision making. There also appeared to be gender and school based differences in the decisiveness of career choice amongst the secondary school cohort, with females demonstrating a higher level of decisiveness than males, whereas males from private schools were more decisive than males from public schools. This supports previous research findings indicating less clarity in

career direction amongst young males than in young females (Porfeli and Mortimer 2010; Ashby and Schoon 2010).

The majority of dancers-in-training indicated the existence of second career choices already identified as possible career paths for when their careers in ballet ceased. This suggested not only a realistic view of the short-term nature of careers in dance, but also flexibility and forethought in contingency and future planning. Given there is little information on the employment decisions, career dynamics and experience of artists over time, this finding adds significant value to the study of career choice within the arts (McCarthy et al. 2001). These findings refute previous research by Pickard and Bailey (2009), who suggest there is limited evidence that young people experience the sorts of ‘epiphanies’ often described by those changing careers in later life. Importantly, the findings from Phase One of the study strongly indicate the existence of sound career identity construction and optimism for the ‘hoped for’ possible selves participants felt they could achieve.

### **Identity Construction and Possible Selves**

*“What do you want to be when you grow up?” Children are often asked this question barely after they can walk and talk. We remain future-oriented as adults, trying desperately to navigate our journey through life. Each one of us harbours goals, fears, aspirations, hopes and dreams about what we want to be in the future.” (Patrick, MacInnis, and Folkes 2002, 270)*

The results of this study provide strong evidence that young people make decisive career decisions that require long-term commitments to training and/or tertiary education in order for them to achieve their goals, with 82% of teenage participants indicating a desire to pursue further studies to achieve their career aspirations. This aligns with previous findings on identity exploration as a foundation for commitments made during emerging adulthood, for as Stringer and Kerpelman (2010) found, it is during this time that young people make important career decisions. The findings also align with more recent research that indicates that young people must have an internally derived sense of self before career exploration

becomes meaningful (Usinger and Smith 2010). The school-aged participants, irrespective of gender and type of schooling, appear to be unphased by the possibility of a turbulent and uncertain economic future. This was particularly evident amongst the dancers-in-training, who understood and articulated the economic and unstable reality of future careers as ballet dancers. There is little research on young dancers' understanding of their future careers (Throsby and Hollister 2003; Frey 1997; Towse 2001), and the findings of this study add new insights.

The ballet cohort in particular demonstrated a strong sense of career identity construction during their childhood, and this sense of identity consolidated their views of their possible selves and career expectations later on in their adolescence, as well as in early career. These align with Hargreaves and Marshalls' (2003) study of professional composers and performers, who were found to be so involved in their career achievement and practice that most other aspects of their lives were also linked to their identity as musicians.

Whilst possible selves is primarily a psychological construct, and as such has its research underpinnings in psychology, clear evidence emerged of the strong linkage between possible selves construction, realisation career choice, aspirations and expectations. In evidence of this, 82% of the secondary school-aged participants identified their ideal selves in the context of career aspiration: for example, relating decisions about further studies and training to realise hoped for careers, as well as a clear articulation of the retention motivators once they were employed.

All of the early career workers indicated they were participating in careers for which they had either trained or studied. This evidence suggests an integration of the exploration of possible selves and career identity. There are also significant implications for career development and retention once young people transition into work. Phase Two participants, who indicated dissatisfaction with their jobs and/or careers (50% of the early career workers in the mainstream sectors), cited the lack of achievement of their possible selves, which incorporated their career aspirations and expectations, as the primary cause of such dissatisfaction. This aligns with previous research findings by Stevenson and Clegg (2010), who suggest that the more developed the possible self is, the more motivated a person is. This leads to the

conclusion that high levels of dissatisfaction could lead to the de-motivation of such workers. This finding was also supported by the ranking of the job retention factors checklist, with the top ranked job retention factors for both cohorts relating intrinsic factors, specifically interesting work and passion for the work performed.

Creativity, self-fulfilment and challenge were rated highly by the ballet cohort, reflecting a strong individual drive to meet career aspirations, as well as reflecting the broader creative focus of the arts. The implications for employers are significant, as current HRM models do not reflect or take into account an individual's need for creativity and self-fulfilment, nor do they provide such a linkage to career attraction and retention.

Stevenson and Clegg (2010) argue the possible selves framework provides a powerful lens for young people to imagine their future, and this has implications for their employability. The findings of this study also suggest a strong link between a young person's intrinsic motivation, particularly a passion for the work performed and self-fulfilment as retention factors, and the achievement of possible selves. This study found that interesting work and passion for the job ranked highly between the mainstream industry and ballet cohorts, reflecting a high level of congruence as to the importance of intrinsic work value. As Pickard (2007) points out, for many in the arts dancing is not simply something they do but also something they are, and being a ballet dancer is an embodiment of identity (Bakker 1988; Wainwright and Turner 2006; Pickard and Bailey 2009; Wellard, Pickard, and Bailey 2007). To a certain extent, this appears to be the case for all young people, not just dancers.

### **The Notion of a Career Calling**

The influence of a 'career calling' on satisfaction and commitment is well established in the literature, and this study found evidence to support this influence. Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) found that those with a calling find their work to be inseparable from life and do not base their career decisions on financial gain or career advancement, but instead on the fulfilment that doing the work brings to the individual. This was certainly the case with the early career workers in this study. The concept of career passion has also been found to have a strong correlation to satisfaction and retention (Hall and Chandler 2005; Hall 2004; Duffy, Dik, and

Steger 2011; Hunter, Dik, and Banning 2010; Elangovan, Pinder, and McLean 2010; Wrzesniewski et al. 1997; Duffy and Sedlacek 2007; Berg, Grant, and Johnson 2010; Bunderson and Thompson 2009; Dik, Duffy, and Eldridge 2009). Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) identified that people with a sense of calling had the highest life and job satisfaction and the lowest absenteeism compared to other people. In fact, there is little written on the career calling of youth. This is the first study with dancers to find a correlation between identification of a career calling, increased job satisfaction, and how that translates into successful career engagement and retention within the early career phase.

The findings of this study fill a void here, particularly for research on the existence of career calling and its relationship to career aspirations and expectations amongst young people. Although other young people in this study generally had a sense of a career calling, those in mainstream industry did not experience this to the same degree as those in the arts. The study results are also an important step in developing an understanding of career passion in dancers and why their job satisfaction and intentions to stay with their employers are so positive, irrespective of work and career difficulties such as family separation, injury, long working hours, poor pay and limited career span. Certainly there are correlations to the protean career (Hall 2002), which relates to a more active career pursuit to meet personal needs, and particularly the notion of a “*path with a heart*” (Hall 2004, 11); however, the protean career concept may not necessarily involve a belief that one’s career is to serve a certain purpose. Knowing one’s career calling provides the individual with a clear sense of identity, and clarity with respect to their values, life purpose and aptitudes or gifts (Hall & Chandler, 2005).

*“To understand the drivers of a person’s career behaviours, we must know more than simply where and when the person has arrived in his or her career. Objective success can be understood by measuring what one has attained, but the deeper sense of fulfilment comes when those attainments measure up favourably with one’s own inner purpose. **True success is not just getting what you want in life – its liking what you get.**” (Hall & Chandler, 2005, 173)*



Evidence of a sense of career purpose and calling was clearly demonstrated by both professional ballet dancers and the dancers-in-training, suggesting a link between career calling and creative, arts-focussed and community based careers. However, what was surprising was the evidence of a career calling amongst the secondary school students interviewed, which was reinforced by a number of those in early graduate careers. Hall and Chandler (2005) reinforce the concept that a calling is a highly individual and subjective experience, but clearly it is one that is strongly evident amongst young people across a range of career aspirations and dreams. Previous research findings indicate that adults with a sense of calling report the **highest** life and job satisfaction and the **lowest** absenteeism, compared to people with other orientations (Hall and Chandler 2005, citing Wrzesniewski et al. 1997). Findings suggest that early career workers seek a better integration of their career aspirations and expectations with work realities. Intrinsic factors such as interesting, enjoyable work, more comprehensive induction and support from mentors, are therefore critical to work engagement, commitment and retention.

### *5.2.2 Relationships: The Intrinsic Nature of Social Exchange Theory and Possible Selves*

The data from the interviews, as well as the job retention checklist, do not suggest a strong linkage between the development of social relationships and/or networks and the achievement of possible selves through career aspirations. There appears to be a greater emphasis on social relationships at work amongst the mainstream industry cohort, with 50% of the sample ranking this as an enjoyable aspect of work. On the other hand, only one of the dancers rated friendships as a critical enjoyment aspect of the role. The dancers' rankings of friendships appeared to be more intrinsically motivated and tied to support networks, such as friends filling the place of family, particularly when working overseas. This seems to suggest that dancers are much more holistic in their view of the work performed as being a part of themselves, and not separate.

The stronger association between social relationships and intentions to stay amongst the graduate cohort could be linked to the broader nature of their work as well as the higher level of dissatisfaction with their career goal achievement. It appears the

higher the dissatisfaction with the work performed the greater the need for social relationships in the workplace. The dancers, on the other hand, indicate complete satisfaction with their achievement of career goals – their possible selves – and the core work duties. In addition, mentors appear to have a role in increasing job satisfaction and intentions to stay as well as providing a greater sense of career reality in the ballet cohort.

Understanding the significance of passion, peers and relationships for these young people will help to establish a better and more strategic linkage between HR recruitment, selection, work design and development strategies and processes. This in turn will allow for a better integration of workplace culture and potential worker attributes in recruitment and selection, along with a more individualised induction and development program, to achieve a more successful fit between career expectations and work reality. Work design strategies also need to include a more individualised fit to career expectations as well as greater opportunities for flexibility in work structures to achieve better work and family life balance.

Central to a strategic human resource management framework is the link between attraction, selection, development and retention. The effectiveness of organisations globally is in many ways dependent upon the qualities of human resource management programs and strategies designed to attract and retain key people (Nankervis et al. 2011). Indeed, there are implications for all sectors of industry, particularly those struggling with the ability to attract, motivate and, more importantly, retain staff. There are also implications for secondary and tertiary education systems, including for career counselling, guidance and career preparation information and services.

### ***5.2.3 Extrinsic Career Attraction Drivers: The Individual and Identity***

The data highlighted a range of extrinsic factors influencing career choice. These included gender, school differences, parental influence, career guidance and counselling offered by educators in both secondary and tertiary institutions, as well as latent career decisions demonstrated by the dance cohort.

### **Gender and School Differences**

Whilst identifying differences in gender was not a research objective within this study, it is worth acknowledging that the findings indicated a gender difference in the decisiveness of career choice. The results suggest 91% of the female participants in the secondary school cohort were clear about their career paths, as opposed to 73% of males. This supports previous research findings on the lack of direction and career certainty of young males (Porfeli and Mortimer 2010; Ashby and Schoon 2010; Hirschi 2010; Zwirn 2006), as well as the gender differences in the occupational choices of young people. This study's findings, as well as the recent literature, suggest that women tend to sway toward career choices that place greater value on work that has flexibility and fits with the family plans.

The common thread among the male participants who were less clear about their career choice, was that they all came from public school educational settings. This suggests that career counselling and information was not as accessible or readily available within the government sector. Even though girls from this setting had clear aspirations, their information was also sometimes lacking. It is possible that public schools are not as readily equipped or informed on the range of changing career options and choices available to young people. Whilst literature examining the impact of socio-economic factors on career choice (Janeiro 2010; Paa and McWhirter 2000; Hargrove, Inman, and Crane 2005; Kenny et al. 2010) exists, the findings from this study suggest the critical influences on career choice emanate from the educational institutions, career counsellors and identity construction rather than socio-economic background. For example, all females from public schools, as with their private school counterparts, had clear career aspirations and understood the educational pathways required to achieve them. Whilst a lack of difference for female participants between public and private schooling exists, it does point to the existence of gendered career choice. However, it is acknowledged that the lack of resources to public/government schools in lower socio-economic areas geographically may have an impact upon the quality and currency of advice provided to students (Hirschi 2010; Noack et al. 2010; Taylor 2002).

### **Parental Pressures and Influences**

There is research evidence to suggest that career identity development and career choice decision making is influenced by a number of factors, including parental influence (Stringer and Kerpelman 2010; Marshall et al. 2008; Dietrich and Kracke 2009; Guerra and Rieker 1999; Hargrove, Inman, and Crane 2005; Noack et al. 2010; Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes 2007; Blustein and Noumair 1996). Whilst not refuted, this study suggests that young people make their own career choices and decisions when the formation of possible selves is strong enough, irrespective of parental influence. For example, some young people in this study indicated that they were going against their parental career choices.

### **Career Guidance and Counselling**

Educational institutions have a critical role to play in providing objective and up-to-date career guidance, information and counselling to young people. The results of this study suggest that secondary schools and universities are not always fulfilling their obligations in this respect, as is discussed below. Identity and possible selves construction occurs during young adulthood, so it is vital that quality, realistic information is provided. In most knowledge-based economies the education process is prolonged, and individuals take longer to find a good match between their work orientations and their jobs, and settle into a stable full-time job (Porfeli and Mortimer 2010). This makes it increasingly important to provide a greater congruence between career information and industry reality. During this period of adolescence, educational institutions need to provide the mechanisms to assist young people discover their aspirations and expectations, as these provide the basis for career decisions in the future. This is supported by a recent study of UK students that found mentoring, counselling and work preparation activities had a positive impact on motivation and engagement:

*“These students were able to remain extremely focused on their future possible self and the actions required to achieve this. They were highly energised and motivated and prepared to put substantial effort in to achieving their envisioned possible self, a self which was often many years in the future.”* (Stevenson and Clegg 2010, 235)

Participants in this study cited issues ranging from inaccurate subject selection information for university entrance to a perceived disconnect between career information and the relevance of university studies to their intended career. Zwirn (2006), in her study of artists and art teachers, suggests that teachers, professors and mentors also need to recognise their influence on the identity formation – and career choice – of these young people. In an increasingly competitive global environment, individuals need to build their careers by exploring opportunities, planning possible careers, and coping successfully with school and work transitions (Janeiro 2010). The role of educational institutions in assisting young people to build a successful life course is more important than ever. The results of this study support Bridgstock's (2009) contention that whilst Australian universities are attempting to address the issue of career development they are 'missing the mark':

*“Generic skill development is an inadequate answer to the question of graduate employability and that for enhanced graduate outcomes in the immediate term and on a sustained basis, universities should promote broader career management competence in students.” (p. 32)*

Bridgstock (2009) further suggests university graduates will require an aptitude for seeking out development opportunities and will need to integrate these into most aspects of their lives. This fits with the strong evidence in this study of a commitment to ongoing education and development. The study findings indicate that the early career graduates lack these abilities and require support and more mentorship than they currently receive. Interestingly, this disconnect or the lack of reliable information did not occur for the ballet cohort in either Phases One and Two. There was a high level of congruence between training, career advice and career realities for these study participants. This suggests that the exposure dancers-in-training have to professional and experienced dancers, as well as to relevant and realistic information on dance careers, provides a realistic preview that is vital to job satisfaction and commitment. This was evidenced by the insights provided by early career dancers on how they felt about their work and career, and their views on any career difficulties.

These findings present serious issues and consequences for existing curricular structure and design in the education sector, in both the obligation to prepare students for future careers and the provision of a breadth of career choice and opportunities. The accurate and practical work reality experiences and opportunities provided to dancers-in-training clearly equip them better than early career graduates in other sectors, resulting in a tighter integration between career expectation and reality. The issues highlighted by the study participants have implications not only for employers but also for the sustainability of the future workforce. The provision of more accurate and realistic career information, short-term work placements, guest speakers and/or classes with industry practitioners (work integrated learning), and better preparation and integration of young peoples' career expectations into work realities will not only reduce training and development costs for employers, but will also lead to a higher retention of these costly and highly skilled workers.

### **Latent Career Decisions**

A significant proportion (75%) of the dancers-in-training had already considered future career choices and opportunities beyond dance. This demonstrated not only a realistic understanding of the extremely short career span of dancers, but also the possibility of careers being cut short by injury or the decision to start a family. It was evident that these latent career choices were not merely fanciful dreams, as 66% already identified they would remain in alternative careers within the arts or ballet. These options had clearly been given thoughtful consideration as interview participants were able to discuss the type of further study required to follow these second career paths.

These latent career considerations were validated by the professional dancers, (both working and retired from dance) interviewed in Phase Two. Two of the active dancers from Phase Two had already commenced tertiary studies on a part-time basis to provide for future career options once their dancing career was over. In both cases, the decision to enrol in degree based studies resulted from a period of severe injury in which the dancers had experienced a 'reality check' of the fragility of their careers in dance. All of the retired dancers interviewed either worked in arts careers or as dance teachers, and indicated they had had realistic expectations of their careers as dancers and had formulated and/or explored latent career decisions whilst they

were still dancing. This supported the realistic career expectations identified by the early career dancers in Phase Two.

### **5.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers**

Much has been written on the career retention drivers of workers, particularly in Human Resource Management texts and journals (Nankervis et al. 2011; Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011; McCabe 2005; De Vos and Meganck 2009; Mills and Millsted 2002; Flowers and Hughes 1973; Hom, Katerberg, and Hulin 1979; Rowland 2004; Smethem 2007; Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003). Strategies and plans to retain workers are also clearly discussed and documented for HR academics and practitioners alike. More recent literature also suggests that workers are becoming more difficult to retain as they value their own career paths more than organisational loyalty (De Vos and Meganck 2009). However, even with the knowledge of changing value systems and drivers for retention, it is clear that many organisations cannot keep their graduate trainees for even a few years, and little is known about how to best manage these young workers (Smith, Oczkowski, and Smith 2011). This suggests the existing models and frameworks on commitment and retention require re-examination.

#### ***5.3.1 Intrinsic Career Retention: The Individual and Identity***

The results of this study indicate that an important missing element in career retention is the inclusion of a commitment to achieving the possible self and/or a career calling; a topic that has not been investigated previously. The participants had a strong sense of their own identity, articulating the types of careers they wanted whilst still at school and selecting careers on the basis of passion and career calling rather than on extrinsic rewards such as pay and status. Phase Two participants also suggested that job satisfaction and intent to stay is predominantly based upon satisfying pre-existing career identities and callings. The findings from both Phases suggest a strong correlation between an intrinsic sense of identity construction, achievement of possible selves and career choice, attraction, and retention. It is the existence of interesting work and an ability to achieve personal goals and passions which present the strongest retention drivers for both cohorts.

Existing research into careers in the creative industries also supports such findings; careers are reported to be motivated by personal freedom and psychological success rather than on position, level or salary; and by professional commitment rather than organisational (Bennett 2009). Whilst Bennett made these observations based on the work of dancers, these characteristics are increasingly indicative of the retention drivers for young people across all industries, as demonstrated in the findings of this study.

Previous research also suggests that more intrinsic factors such as learning opportunities and career development, instead of or alongside financial rewards, appear to be a critical determinant in the motivation and retention of workers in today's knowledge-based society (Armstrong and Brown 2006). A key element emerging from the literature is that retention practices will only be successful if they are consistent with what workers value (De Vos and Meganck 2009, 46), and this is certainly consistent with the finding that young people in this study whose expectations were not met are already considering changing careers. The data provided by the dance cohort makes it clear they are motivated exclusively by intrinsic factors and that they will only leave their employer, or career, if forced to by lack of funding, injury or parenting responsibilities. Whilst this highlights the specific nature of dance as an employment sector, it does demonstrate the importance of the provision of interesting and challenging work to workers across the board.

### ***5.3.2 Intrinsic Career Retention: Characteristics of Work***

One of the top five retention drivers for early career participants from both cohorts in Phase Two is interesting work. This is consistent with the findings of Sturges and Guest (2001) and McCabe, Nowak and Mullen (2005) who found in their interviews with young workers that the key retention drivers were challenging, stimulating and interesting work. Found to be more important to them than pay, the young workers believed they “*could never be compensated for having to do a boring, unstimulating job*” (Sturges and Guest, 452). Guest's (2001) study also found a direct correlation between organisational commitment and challenging, interesting work. This is congruent with the results of a New Zealand study in which the lack of interesting work was an important push factor for turnover and a pull factor for retention (Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003). Whilst it could be argued that the provision



of interesting work is a retention factor for most workers, the cohort in this study listed the provision of interesting work as their most important job retention factor. This supports the literature findings in Chapter Two that the younger generations are more highly skilled and educated, thus may have more flexibility and a greater employment choice, particularly given the current work environment of skill shortages and ageing populations; but it also supports a more intrinsically skewed belief and value system. The young people interviewed for this study were passionate about their career choices and were driven by this passion, with extrinsic factors playing a secondary role.

The mainstream industry cohort ranked development and promotional opportunities, followed by work colleagues, highly as job retention factors. This reflects the importance of training, development and succession planning for this cohort. Indeed, a number of study participants indicated that their work satisfaction levels had already decreased because these elements were lacking. As a result, they expressed intentions to leave.

Career sustainability, in terms of balancing work and personal lives, particularly considerations toward family life, also strongly featured in all research phases. These findings are supported by the work of Stokes and Wyn (2007), who also discovered that young people placed wellbeing, lifestyle and leisure as a central focus within their working lives, influencing their concepts of career within the broader context. There is congruence between the views of the young secondary school-aged participants interviewed in Phase One and the early career workers and retired dancers in Phase Two. There appears to be a conservative approach to family life and child rearing; rather than seeing opportunities for balancing work and family life, young women are willing to sacrifice their career for family, suggesting a balance is not achievable or desirable. This is a key issue with significant implications for organisations in regards to retention. This also supports the findings of Sturges and Guest (2001), whose study of university graduates in their study indicated that, whatever the circumstance, if the balance between work and home life was not there, graduates would consider leaving the organisation rather than tolerate an imbalance. The New Zealand study previously referred to also found that half of those who had left their employers had cited a desire to improve work/life balance as

the main reason (Boxall, Macky, and Rasmussen 2003). Whilst these views may suggest a problem in existing current organisational work flexibility strategies, or the promotion of such strategies, it also highlights the existence of a significant degree of choice available to young men and women. It is refreshing to observe the existence of such a strong belief amongst young people in the existence of a choice between how they manage work and family lives, but it is also indicative of the challenges besetting organisations in managing such expectations.

### ***5.3.3 Extrinsic Career Retention Drivers: The Individual and Identity***

Whilst intrinsic motivators/drivers associated with the fulfilment of possible selves were found to be the most important to the study participants, the role of money was also raised consistently. However, this was seen as a means by which to support themselves and their families and not as a key driver to remain within the job and career long-term. Company values were found to be the least important career retention factor, due to the lack of synergy between such values and the participants' own sense of career identity, providing further evidence of the strength of the intrinsic retention drivers of identity, identity construction and achievement of possible selves.

#### **Financial Rewards**

The value of money as a means for supporting and sustaining positive family life was a key issue with the young secondary school participants, particularly the males. This suggests that money and financial rewards are instrumental in achieving intrinsic goals, rather than these being extrinsic motivators. However, there is very little literature available on Generation Z's views on rewards, as most literature relates to Gen Y who grew up in a very different and more affluent and stable economic environment and doubtless this influences their responses. What is clear is that the findings of the study are congruent with more recent research suggesting that the role of money as a financial reward has a non-significant impact on outcomes (De Vos and Meganck 2009). This suggests an urgent need for organisations to review their emphasis on remuneration strategies as an extrinsic reward that will retain staff, and to direct their energies toward the more influential intrinsic factors such as work content and work flexibility, which provide a better balance between work and family responsibilities.

### **Company Values**

Both the dance and non-dance cohorts identified image/status, company ethics/values and recognition as the lowest ranked job retention factors; the role of image and status was the least important retention factor, and company ethics and values the second least important. The low rating of company values and ethics indicates that company values and mission statements lack meaning or importance to young workers, for whom the actual work performed is more important. The findings are unclear as to whether the actual values and ethics lack importance to young people or, whether this is an issue of how such value and ethics statements are framed in an organisational context, this area merits further research. Irrespective, the findings are significant for organisations. Although a great deal of attention and financial investment is directed to marketing company ethics, values and mission statements as part of their attraction strategies, these appear unconnected to commitment enhancing outcomes for young people. Specifically, this lends even greater support to the findings that indicate the important role of intrinsic rewards, in particular the achievement of possible selves, in the development and maintenance of commitment and increasing retention. Whilst the literature on this linkage is scant, the previous research on vocational aspirations of youth (Freer 2009; Goodwin and O'Connor 2005), lower turnover intentions of emotionally attached worker (Carmeli and Weisberg 2006), self commitment (Johnson, Chang et al. 2010) and career callings (Bunderson and Thompson 2009; Duffy and Sedlacek 2010; Duffy, Dik and Steger 2011; Peterson et al. 2000) all support such a finding.

### **5.4 Organisational Commitment and a New Model for Foci and Bases of Commitment**

Previous research on organisational commitment has been concerned with the processes that lead workers to commit themselves to the activities, aspirations and goals of an organisation and/or workgroup (Haslam et al. 2006, 608). A number of foci or bases of commitment have been identified within these studies: for example, the workgroup or team, the job, the occupation or the profession and the organisation. However, little attention has been given to the achievement of an individual's possible self, in terms of career, and how this achievement may in fact

lead to greater work satisfaction, improved performance and increased intentions to stay.

In recent years, researchers have begun to view commitment as having multiple foci and bases, and the above have been extended to include the team, the supervisor, the job, and the career and/or profession (Becker and Billings 1993; Randall 1990; Becker 1992; Becker et al. 1996; Boshoff and Mels 2000; Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed 2002; Swailes 2002). Linkages between these multiple foci and increased affective commitment has been researched extensively and it has been acknowledged that affective commitment is primarily an emotional attachment (Allen and Meyer 1996). Nonetheless, what appears to be missing from even the most recent literature is a body of research into the impact of achievement of the possible self-aspirations on affective commitment. Certainly, self is a strong emotional state, and the achievement of self-job and/or career aspirations and expectations could lead to increased organisational commitment.

The literature in Chapter Two identified the gap in the existing foci and bases framework and where the influence of the possible self, in terms of goals, values, and aspirations, are considerably under-researched. Johnson, Chang et al. (2010) also identify this gap, suggesting that *“Beyond demographics, few studies have examined other individual differences that potentially impact commitment.”* (p. 226). The role of individual difference in organisational commitment is considerable. The link between commitment and motivation is clear, thus motivation based individual differences need to be considered (Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010). Evidence of the importance of, and links between, the self-concept and the foci of commitment was highlighted by Johnson and Chang (2006). An acknowledgement of self as a foci of commitment was also made by Zettler, Friedrich et al. (2011) but this was limited to self in terms of career commitment, and not to emotional drivers, such as passion and a career calling as such. Research demonstrates the power of the achievement of possible selves and the fulfilment of a career calling:

*“When individuals hold job and career orientations, their identities tend not to fully overlap with their occupations; they view work as a separate entity from the rest of life. When individuals hold calling orientations,*

*however, their identities and occupations are inseparably linked. Those with a calling orientation imbue their work with personal and social meaning: they perceive it as intrinsically enjoyable and as making valuable contributions to society” (Berg, Grant, and Johnson 2010, 974).*

The organisational benefits of matching candidates and their aspirations of possible self and career calling appear enormous. For example, having a calling has been linked to several self-reported benefits, including higher life, health, and work satisfaction, and lower absenteeism than job and career-oriented respondents (Berg, Grant, and Johnson 2010, 974).

Possible self as a new addition to the model for Foci and Bases of Commitment is quite separate from the existing area of career and/or profession. Achievement of possible selves is based upon attaining the individual’s own goals, values, aspirations and passions, and not the values of a particular profession or career. The study participants found a match between their own passions and aspirations to a career, but it is the tasks and work associated with that profession that attracts them, not the profession itself. This was also clearly articulated by the participants in the ranking of retention levers on the Job Retention checklist included in the study; ‘Interesting work’ and ‘passion for the job’ ranked in the top five for both cohorts in Phase Two. Essentially, it is the nature of the work and the passion they have that drives them to stay – not the profession or career.

The process of constructing a positive sense of self is an important and burgeoning topic of research (Packard and Conway 2006; Oyserman, Brickman, and Rhodes 2007; Oyserman et al. 2004; Slay 2006; Grote and Raeder 2009; Kenny et al. 2010; Usinger and Smith 2010; Hirschi and Vondracek 2009; Primé et al. 2010; Teraji 2009; Johnson, Chang, and Yang 2010). Whilst initially a focal point for psychological research, it is clear that a concept linked to what people hope or expect to become in the future (Packard and Conway 2006), particularly in terms of vocation and career, has strong and important linkages to research in the fields of organisational behaviour, vocational behaviour, management and human resource management. The adapted conceptual framework shown in Figure 4.1 in Chapter Four illustrates the link between the achievement of possible selves to emotional

work attachment. This was supported in the rankings on the job retention checklist, which clearly show a correlation between the emotionality associated with the performance of the work (passion) and increased intentions to stay (retention).

The findings of this study support Berg et al's. (2010) argument that young people have an internalised and idealistic belief that they can become anything they want to be, and they tend to consider a wide range of potential occupational callings. This can be seen in the wide variety of choices identified by participants in this study, shown in Table 4.4 in Chapter Four. The global shortage of educated and skilled labour means they do have such choice: as Berg et al. (2010) suggest, for a significant number of workers the world of work is structured in a way that restricts their ability to pursue all of the occupations that call to them. Young people do not accept this; even as they move into one career they think about how they can go into another. This was voiced by the young dancers in particular, who recognised that even though they had made a tremendous commitment to dance as a career they needed to already consider career decisions post dance. This consideration of latent career decisions was confirmed by the retired dancers interviewed in Phase Two. Similarly, young people who succeeded in obtaining coveted graduate positions were willing to walk away if the job did not meet expectations. Berg et al. (2010) comments that work systems are too inflexible to recognise this need for better work previews, employee investment and development. The findings from both cohorts support the inclusion of possible selves as an integral construct in the promotion of organisational satisfaction, commitment, engagement and an increased intent to stay. Given that the two cohorts were quite distinct, this suggests that the findings may be generalisable across multiple situations.

## **5.5 Ballet as a Career Choice**

*'It has been said that there is no such thing as art – only artists. It is even truer to say that there is no such thing as dance, only dancers'*  
(Bland 1976, 133).

As outlined in Chapter One, the inclusion of ballet dancers provided an excellent context within which to study some of the underlying themes of career attraction and

retention. The Australian dance sector is currently thriving, representing a high worth creative capital (More, Carroll, and Foss 2009). Despite this, conditions of employment for dancers, unlike the extreme case of those employed in the Western Australian booming resource sector, are still poor. It is important to understand the specific nature of ballet dancers' employment conditions, including their earnings and career paths, in order to gain a clearer picture of the strength of attraction and retention drivers for this industry.

The renaissance, stereotypical image of the starving artist portrayal (Bain 2005) discussed in Chapter Two appears to have changed very little. However, they are not immune to the realities of their career; it is the dance itself that is the most powerful motivator.

The physicality of ballet requires the unrelenting development and refinement of physical capital as identified by Wainwright and Turner (2006). Even with the odds against them, as highlighted by Throsby and Hollister (2003), Frey (1997), Menger (1999), and Towse (2001) many dancers go on to succeed and work within the industry in spite of the major inhibitor being the lack of financial return on their professional and creative practice. This study clearly suggests that dancers are not attracted to the profession, nor retained within it, for extrinsic, financial rewards. Indeed, they need to be intensely intrinsically motivated to survive.

Ballet dancers endure significant pain and injury in order to pursue their art form, and for those participating in this study it was clear that injury was a significant concern. This was not because of the pain of the actual injury, but because of its impact upon their ability to train and perform. For example, one dancer from the Sacramento Ballet, now 30 years of age, explains the cumulative effect of a six month performance season on her body:

*“I’ve sprained my left ankle nine times. I’ve had Achilles tendinitis and flexor tendinitis in my left foot...A labra (cartilage) tear in my right hip. There was a cyst in my right hip. I’ve had numerous back spasms, a disc bulge behind L5 and S1 (in her lower back). And I’ve sprained my wrists, both of them. And I’ve had a lot of small injuries I don’t need to*

*mention, but those are the big ones. Oh, and I had stress fractures in my fibula, right leg, that was around the same time as the hip thing.”*

*(Anonymous 2008)*

And she is still dancing

Phase One dance participants all understood the risks of dance careers and had concerns about the impact of injury on their ability to continue to work. Indeed, one dancer-in-training was unable to train due to an injury. Similarly, early career dancers provided details of injuries sustained during their careers and the interruption to work. These injury concerns were also articulated by the retired dancers interviewed in Phase Two of the study. Nevertheless, these concerns and realities did not impact upon Phase One and Two participants' passion for the profession nor deterred them from continuing in their pursuit of, or continuing work in, ballet. Even though the dancers-in-training and early career dancers were committed to their careers, they were already thinking of a second career. This was validated by the comments of retired dancers who, despite having a relatively short physical dance career, still maintain some continued association, primarily through teaching and/or choreography, with dance (Kogan 2002). The retired dancers reported high levels of satisfaction with their dancing careers, even though they were short-term, injury prone and low paid. All retired dancers interviewed in Phase Two maintained a continued association with the arts sector, with all but one working directly in a ballet related role.

## **5.6 Congruence Between Career Expectation and Work Reality**

The study provides clear evidence of a culture shock amongst early career workers new to the workforce. Work preparedness was more evident amongst the ballet cohort, much of which was due to the exposure they had during their training, to existing and retired dancers and opportunities to visit and train with companies. Phase One and Two participants from the ballet cohort also cited the existence of more realistic insights into the career provided by their educators.



The findings concur with the research by Earl et al. (2011), who found that graduates exit organisations early in their careers for reasons including a lack of alignment with pre-employment expectations, lack of training and development opportunities, and poor cultural fit and work-life balance. Coming to a similar conclusion, Sturges and Guest (2001) suggest that organisations need to overhaul their recruitment practices and seek alignment with graduate needs. The findings of this study also resonate with research conducted by De Vos and Meganck (2009), who found that a failure to meet inducements offered to staff implies a breach of contract, thus eroding commitment and increasing intentions to leave. Clearly, organisations need to take responsibility and ensure that expectations created before, as well as at the commencement of employment, are met.

### ***5.6.1 Realistic Job Previews***

The critical issue highlighted here is the lack of realistic job previews being provided to successful candidates for jobs. This is surprising given the abundance of literature cited in Chapter Two, some of which has been available for the past three decades, confirming the linkages between the provision of realistic job previews and satisfaction and retention (Meglino and DeNisi 1987; Hom et al. 1999; Phillips 1998; Sussmann 1990; Saks 1994; De Vos, De Stobbeleir, and Meganck 2009; Carless and Wintle 2007). The Wanous (1992) model on the psychological effects of realistic job previews demonstrates the impact of accurate organisational information on job satisfaction, intentions to quit, and ultimately, job survival (Saks 1994). This matches the study findings of early career participants in the mainstream industry cohort where extensive recruitment and selection strategies were used to select successful candidates, the provision of realistic job previews was missing, leading to work dissatisfaction and increased intention to quit. This provides strong evidence of the significant impact that providing accurate information about the job has on prospective workers.

However, the same gap between career expectation and reality did not exist for the ballet dancers. The world of an elite dancer is a tough environment fraught with potential rejection, prejudice and injury. However, participants indicated that realistic job previews were provided early in their training and this was reinforced as their training progressed. These previews were provided by the key people in their

lives throughout their training: dance teachers, dance educators, guest artists and dancers met during national and international summer schools and workshops. Research also suggests those involved in ballet education and training seek to prepare the young people for negative experiences (Pickard and Bailey 2009). The evidence from this study suggests that they have been successful in achieving this.

## **5.7 Career Success**

Traditional definitions of linear career progression seem not to apply to young early career workers in either cohort. Career success was not described by either cohort in terms of promotion, status or title – indeed, job status was one of the least important job retention drivers listed by the early career participants in Phase Two of the study. Rather, career success was determined by whether or not study participants achieved their possible selves and/or career calling, found their job interesting, or were happy at work. This was also iterated by participants in Phase One who indicated that success is thought of as something intrinsic and part of being happy in life at an early age. In particular, the dancers-in-training knew they had little chance of promotion within a company, but were still content to be able to perform and work in ballet. This view was validated by the retired dancers interviewed in Phase Two.

The implications for employers are considerable as success for these young people is determined by the consequences of correct alignment between career expectations and work reality. As previously highlighted by the literature, this includes and has implications for a range of human resource processes including the development of staff recruitment and selection strategies, realistic job previews, comprehensive induction programs and flexible and individualised job design strategies (Mayrhofer et al. 2005; Smethem 2007; Earl et al. 2011).

## **5.8 Study Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to the study. Firstly, Western Australia demonstrates some unique attributes due to its role as a booming resources state. The remoteness of the State, as well as the relative economic prosperity, may well have had a more positive impact on the values and views of young people than may exist in other States or countries. This means there may be issues of generalisability

nationally as well as internationally. This study was undertaken during the global financial crisis, and although Western Australia as a State is economically affluent, young participants were aware of the hardships being experienced internationally. Although this is more likely to be problematic for Phase One secondary school-aged participants and the Phase Two mainstream industry cohort, the early career ballet cohort living and working nationally and the results for this group are representative of the working Australian ballet sector. The state-centric nature of the Phase One findings also provides an opportunity for further comparative research. The study participants from Phase One primarily represent an urban, well-resourced school sample. Young people in schools in remote areas may have presented different perspectives among the career aspirations and expectations, as has been argued by McDonald et al (2011). This provides an opportunity for comparative research between secondary school-aged students in metropolitan/city and rural/isolated communities.

The relatively small sample size, particularly in Phase Two of the study, does raise questions as to how generalisable the results are to young people more broadly. However, saturation point was relatively quickly reached in both phases of the study which suggests that the findings could well be generalisable amongst similar cohorts and reinforced similarities across the groups. Nevertheless, there exists opportunities to extend the study further and build upon the existing data with additional focus group interviews with secondary school-aged children, dancers-in-training and early career workers across both the mainstream and dance sectors.

The Phase One ballet cohort was significantly skewed by gender with only one male participant. This is in part representative of the skewed nature of the industry to female participation. In Phase Two, 80% of the participants were female, and whilst this was representative of the ballet sector, it does present a limitation for the overall graduate employment sector. However, the focus of the study was the attraction and retention motivators of young people and it could be considered that, with the exception of the work and life balance issues, the views would be representative of both genders. Given the work and life balance views of young males in Phase One of the study (12 males), it is also likely their views regarding work and life balance may also be consistent with the views of the young women. The young men

participating represented 50% of the secondary school students participating and 40% of the total number of participants in Phase One of the study and their views regarding balancing work and family responsibilities were congruent with the young women. Nevertheless, the findings on the views of young women would be of interest to researchers and employers alike.

Despite these limitations, this study provides a sound basis for further research and investigation as there was a high level of congruence and agreement between both cohorts across the two phases. The study also provides an opportunity for further research into the career choices of young people, the linkages between possible selves and work commitment and the role and impact of work passion and career calling in job retention.

## **5.9 Future Research Opportunities**

Given the Western Australian centric nature of the study and the small sample size, it may be difficult to generalise these findings, therefore further qualitative and quantitative research maybe warranted. For example, there may be differences within specific industry cohorts (i.e. law, accounting) where early career participants may have different foci for their learning outcomes and earning potential with a clearer career path. There may also be age-centric explanations for the findings (Kowske, Rasch et al. 2010; Levenson 2010), therefore revisiting the study with the secondary school-aged participants when they are older and are working may also have an impact upon not only their attitudes to work and career, but also to balancing work and family life.

The proposed expansion to the Foci and Bases of Commitment framework to include self and passion as key constructs, is one of the most significant findings of this study and warrants further investigation. In addition to this, the role and impact of educational institutions in the career preparation, aspirations and choices of young people is also worthy of further research. What role do these institutions have in shaping the aspirations and expectations, and what are the strategies currently in use? In addition to this, what are the strategies organisations can use or implement to

better manage realistic job previews and the placement and support of young workers and how might these outcomes be achieved?

Research into the dance sector, particularly ballet, is also limited to performance and career transition, and there are opportunities for further exploration of the expectations of dancers-in-training as well as the experiences of early career dancers. Kogan (2002) also suggests there is significant potential in longitudinal studies for researchers to further explore why individuals embark on and persist in a performing arts career.

There are also opportunities for further research into attitudes to careers in the public sector within an Australian context. Indeed, the constructs outlined in the existing literature in relation to the motivation and intentions to stay for United States or United Kingdom public service workers (Perry 1996; Georgellis, Iossa, and Tabvuma 2011) bear little relevance to a significant number of employees working for public institutions in Australia therefore reflecting a need for more comprehensive research within an Australian context.

### ***5.9.1 Contribution to Theory***

The increasing importance of career retention, not only within the Australian context, but globally, warrants more research in this area. There is, in particular, a lack of research that comprehensively incorporates workers' motivations for staying or leaving the organisation (De Vos and Meganck 2009, 47), particularly among young workers. Whilst Chapter Two highlighted the existence of extensive research into intrinsic motivators such as job design (Nankervis et al. 2011), work/life balance (Duxbury and Higgins 2008; Carless and Wintle 2007), career development (Parker and Inkson 1999; Hudson 2009) and more recently the psychological contract (De Hauw and De Vos 2010; De Vos and Meganck 2009; Makin, Cooper, and Cox 1996; Hess and Jepsen 2009), little theoretical research exists on the impact of social identity, identity construction, possible selves and career calling on commitment, engagement and retention. The study findings demonstrate that a number of young people had a career calling and strong passion for the career they aspired to. This prevalence of passionate career aspirations is one that needs to be examined carefully by academics and practitioners alike because it has implications for job retention.

The study demonstrates that young people have the capacity to commit to a job for the short-term, knowing full well that they may make other choices in the future. This is something that has not been identified in previous studies.

The findings provide a research basis in the fields of employee and organisational commitment to test the expanded Foci and Bases of Commitment framework to include possible selves and the impact of this – as well as emotional work attachment - to intentions to stay, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Again, this is an area not previously explored and the findings of the study would suggest that these relationships should shed some insights of a very practical nature.

The previous research suggesting a correlation between high levels of job satisfaction and retention make it clear that this is an area for further research, as it offers significant returns to employers. The current human resource management models for attraction and retention are producing ‘lack lustre’ results in the workplace, and a shift toward a more individual oriented and psychologically based model, which incorporates recognising and meeting the individual’s possible self and career calling, requires more attention. There is also a significant lack of research linking the career aspirations and expectations of young people to career success outcomes in adults (Ashby and Schoon 2010) as well as the relationship between identity construction and career decision making identity (Stringer and Kerpelman, 2010). Again, this is an area of future research opportunities as there are significant linkages to career choice, job attraction, training and development, succession planning and career retention.

Findings also indicate an opportunity for further research into theoretical frameworks for educational and curriculum development, along with the impact of gender and socio-economic status on career choice and aspirations. Whilst the Phase One sample size is relatively small, it does raise questions about the effectiveness of career counselling and support across the range of school types and geographic locations. In addition to making a significant contribution to theory, the findings also have extensive application to the development of human resource management practices, as discussed below.

### **5.9.2 Contribution to Practice**

The findings of this study are significant to the further development of existing theory of commitment and career attraction and retention, and although preliminary, suggest transferability across multiple employment sectors.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators of career attraction and retention have the most significant implications for human resource practice. The findings clearly show the relative insignificance of financial rewards in engaging and retaining young workers. These young, skilled and educated workers are driven by intrinsic factors positioned with their own sense of identity construction and the achievement of possible selves, which are often poorly reflected in existing strategies. This demonstrates the need for talent management and career development strategies to be re-visited to ensure they are appropriate and current to meet the workforce needs in the future. A review of current attraction, performance management, remuneration, development and reward strategies and packages is also essential if organisations are to retain their best talent.

An evaluation of existing recruitment and selection strategies to ensure they reflect realistic job previews is needed and applicable to all organisations, industries and sector type. Organisations should also learn from the study findings and re-evaluate their work design and development strategies. They can do this by developing structured induction and mentoring programs, as well as designing jobs to enable and empower workers to achieve their career aspirations – their possible selves. Introduction of a more flexible and individualised approach to attraction, selection and development, will mean these human resource strategies and processes can have a positive impact upon meeting worker expectations and commitment, engagement and retention.

The sample, whilst relatively small, provides a basis for future comparative, national and international educational practices with implications for curriculum, educator and counsellor development. This has particular relevance to identifying the impediments faced by young people striving to achieve their career aspirations, whether in urban, rural or remote schools; and within a variety of socio-economic contexts and settings. Young people will have a considerable impact on the nature of

the workplace of the future and will be a significant cost investment in terms of remuneration, training and development. Any research findings which support improved career aspirations, identification and development will be of vital importance to all organisations, public and private.

There are also opportunities for further exploration into the aspirations, expectations and career concerns of young dancers-in-training to provide better support, particularly in the early stages of their career. For example, the fact that they, in many cases, continue to dance and aggravate an injury suggests that career care and management is lacking. Investment in elite dance training programs is expensive and time consuming, and an analysis of the characteristics, aspirations and retention rates of young dancers is beneficial to both educational and arts institutions. Career opportunities and labour movement outside of Australia would also be beneficial to the national arts community.

## **5.10 Conclusions**

The key objective of the research was to explore and identify the attraction and retention drivers that encourage young people to pursue their career of choice as well as the key similarities and differences in career aspirations and work experiences between the two distinct cohorts of young people. The data for the study was collected in two phases: focus groups with young people (N=30) enrolled in full-time secondary school study as well as those participating in full-time dance studies; interviews with early career workers (N=11) in ballet and other sectors; and interviews with retired dancers (N=5) to provide a representative voice for the dance sector and to validate the perceptions of young people seeking dance careers. The data was transcribed and coded into themes, categories and sub categories utilising the NVivo software package, which assisted with the determination of themes across the cohorts and research phases, cross referencing themes and categories to individual cases and the comparison of demographic data. From the data a number of key findings emerged; young people demonstrated a desire to achieve possible selves and a passion for a career at a young age; intrinsic factors were the most significant career attraction and retention motivators amongst both groups in the two



cohorts; and the greatest degree of congruence between career expectation and reality was evident amongst the dance cohort.

Young people make significant career choice decisions early in life, and these are driven primarily by a sense of passion about the type of work they want to do and would enjoy, irrespective of parental and school pressure. The findings demonstrate that these young people have a fairly clear sense of the educational and training paths they need to follow in order to achieve such career callings. Intrinsic factors were the key determinants of a satisfying career amongst participants in both Phases One and Two of the study. The overwhelming career attraction and retention driver amongst both groups was securing interesting and challenging work about which they were passionate. Irrespective of their gender, work and life balance was a key element in future career retention decisions of all participants. Whilst dancers, even during early training, had an accurate and realistic understanding of the harsh realities of life as a dancer, the early career cohort in mainstream industry lacked a realistic and accurate view of the career they were choosing to enter. It appears that educational institutions as well as potential and prospective employers provided insufficient training and information regarding working conditions, workplace culture and the actual work to be performed. Irrespective of the congruence between career expectation and reality, the study demonstrated that young people have the capacity to commit to a job for the short-term with the knowledge that will be likely to make other choices in the future. They were comfortable with this probability of career change and a number of the dancers-in-training and early career dancers already had alternative careers already selected.

This study has the potential to make a significant contribution not only to the theoretical framework for the foci and bases of commitment with the inclusion of a possible selves construct, but also to the improvement of attraction and retention rates more generally. The findings provide a greater insight into the significant impact of the career drivers and needs amongst young people. With this in mind, further investigation of the career preparation activities within secondary and tertiary educational institutions may alleviate the findings that there is a lack of consistency as well as adequacy in the preparation of young people for entry into the tertiary environment as well as the workplace.

This study has met its research objectives and answered each of the research questions. It has also produced an expanded model for foci of commitment, incorporating possible selves and work passion as additional foci which would result in emotional work attachment thus leading to increased intentions to stay, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A significant insight has been made into what ignites and maintains young peoples' passion for their work, which will contribute to a better and more strategic linkage between human resource recruitment, selection, work design and development strategies and processes.

In an era where there is a 'war for talent' the importance and applicability of the study findings are significant, for as De Vos and Meganck (2009) argue, attracting and retaining talented workers offers a competitive advantage to organisations, regardless of the economic environment. The attraction and retention of skilled and particularly young workers is the biggest human resource management challenge facing organisations. These findings provide some resolution and relief to those willing to rise to the challenge.

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## APPENDIX 1

**Table 3.2 Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues**

ITEM	POSITIVISM	POST-POSITIVISM	CRITICAL THEORY ET AL	CONSTRUCTIVISM	PARTICIPATORY
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Non-falsified hypotheses that are probable facts or laws	Structural/historical insights	Individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus	Extended epistemology; primacy of practical knowing; critical subjectivity; living knowledge
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion – “building blocks” adding to “edifice of knowledge”; generalisations and cause-effect linkages	Accretion – “building blocks” adding to “edifice of knowledge”; generalisations and cause-effect linkages	Historical revisionism; generalisation of similarity	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience	In communities of inquiry embedded in communities of practice
Goodness or quality measure	Conventional benchmarking of “rigor”: internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity	Conventional benchmarking of “rigor”: internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity	Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance and misapprehension; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity	Congruence of experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical knowing; leads to action to transform the world in the service of human flourishing
Values	Excluded – influence denied	Excluded – influence denied	Included – formative	Included – formative	Included – formative
Ethics	Extrinsic; tilt toward deception	Extrinsic; tilt toward deception	Intrinsic: moral tilt toward revelation	Intrinsic: process tilt toward revelation	Intrinsic: process tilt toward revelation
Inquirer posture	“disinterested scientist: as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents	“disinterested scientist: as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents	“transformative intellectual” as advocate and activist	“passionate participant” as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction	Primary voice manifest through aware self-reflective action; secondary voices in illuminating theory, narrative, movement, song, dance, and other presentational forms
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical; quantitative and qualitative; substantive theories	Re-socialisation; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism and empowerment	Re-socialisation; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism and empowerment	Co-researchers are initiated into the inquiry process by facilitator/researcher and learn through active engagement in the process; facilitator/researcher requires emotional competence, democratic personality and skills

**Source:** Lincoln, Y.S & Guba, E.G 2000, “Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences”, in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, Denzin, N.K & Lincoln, Y.S, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 170-71.

## APPENDIX 2

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### **Focus Group Interview Questions: Secondary School Students**

#### **Impact of Part-time Work**

1. Are you currently involved in part time work outside of school? If so, what work are you doing (how long been working there, how many hours worked) and what influence has it had on your future career choices and why?
2. What are your best/worst experiences you have had with your part time work?

#### **Sources and Impact of Career Advice**

1. Have you decided on a career?
2. What factors do you take into consideration in making your choice?
3. Did anyone or anything influence your career choice? (Prompt for the role of parents, career counselors, peers etc)
4. Have you had any career sessions/advice at school as yet? If so, what did you get out of it and types of careers discussed?
5. Do you have career counselors at school and what do you believe their role is?
6. What would you like to help you make up your mind towards a suitable career choice/ (Prompt for industry advice such as grad programs/ role of university services/school)

#### **Values/Attitudes to Work/Career Choices**

1. Would you prefer working for public organizations or private? Why? Does the size of the organisation matter?
2. In your job choice, what will matter most?
3. If your job becomes too demanding of your time, will you choose your own leisure needs (time for yourself)/your family or your job? (Prompt for work life balance views)
4. What are your thoughts on having leadership roles in the job of your choice? How soon must you be promoted?

#### **Career Retention**

1. What would keep you in your career?
2. What would make you the most happy in your job?
3. What about money

**Work/Life Balance**

1. What are your thoughts on balancing work and family?
2. What career choices will change once family comes along?
3. What would you want from your employer once you have family?

## APPENDIX 3

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### Focus Group Interview Questions: Dancers-in-Training

**Participant Demographic Profile** (Please note that this information is for coding purposes only. No personal details will be included in the study or report):

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GENDER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**YEAR AT SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF SCHOOL ENROLMENT:** Are you enrolled full-time; part-time; distance education/correspondence; classes at ballet school (please circle as appropriate).

**NO. OF YEARS BALLET TRAINING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BALLET LEVEL/STAGE:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### QUESTIONS

1. What made you decide to study ballet at such an intensive level?
2. Are you studying towards a career in ballet? Why?
3. What attracts you to ballet?
4. Does anything about a career in ballet concern you?
5. If you look at other friends – your own age and who are not studying ballet – is there anything that they are doing that you think you are missing out on? How does that make you feel?
6. Where do you think your best career opportunities are and why?
7. What do you need to do to fulfill your career aspirations?
8. Describe how dancing makes you feel.
9. How long do you think you will be able to sustain the career?
10. What type of work would you do if you had to give up on ballet?
11. If you choose to have a family later on in life, do you think this will impact on your career in ballet? How?

## APPENDIX 4

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### Dancers-in-Training Focus Group One Transcript: 5 May 2009

#### 6 PARTICIPANTS

##### **Interviewer**

The purpose of this interview is to gain an insight into your views on why you are studying ballet and what you want from your career and why you are pursuing it. This interview will form part of a PhD study. Your parents were invited to sign consent forms due to your age and I also have a working with children check. Your own names will not be used in any way in this study. The only things I will use are some direct quotes and the overall context of what you are saying but you will not be identified.

As we are using a Dictaphone I will get you all to speak clearly and to try and not speak together so that we can clearly get what each of you are saying.

##### **To Start with, what made you all decide to study ballet at such an intensive level?**

G1. I have always danced and like I love a challenge and I'm actually a very competitive person. I can't think of anything else I would rather do.

G2. Like alex I enjoy a challenge and am a very competitive person and I love a challenge and like yeh

G3. Pretty much the same as holly – the challenge and seeing if I can achieve my goals working hard to see if I can. It's always been ballet.

G4. I've always had a passion for it. It was always hard wanting to dance and not having the opportunity to do it all the time like I can now

G5. I've like always had a passion for it. I've always wanted to dance. It's how I've always felt.

B1 – I've always danced. Like, I have done jazz and tap and basically every dance you can think of. It's like so natural – like it's a part of me. When I came to ballet it was like this is what I was waiting for – it's me – its natural. It gives you such a natural high. Like Sonja says she doesn't understand why people take drugs and drink and stuff like when dancing gives you such a natural high. It's this unbelievable feeling of joy. When your dancing you feel so great it's an unbelievable feeling. You look forward to the performing, rehearsal and the like whole enjoyment of it. It's so exciting. I always think about performance the whole environment like

B1. I tried like jazz, hip hop, tap and all that but when I started ballet I knew it was where I wanted to be. There is nothing else



**So I get the impression that all of you want this to be your job?**

G1. Yep

G2. Yeh

G4. Yeh, definitely.

G3. Yeh. Like I came to dance late, like at 10 I was a late starter but it's wanted I want to do – It's part of me.

G5. Yeh, I can't think of anything else. It's hard but it's worth it. It was really hard when I came here cause it was at such a higher level. But its good now.

G3. Like I don't care about earning lots of money. Like I know you don't get paid much in ballet but I don't care.

B1. I don't want to do anything else you know what I mean? It's like the only thing

**Can you try and put into words why you want this to be your job?**

G1. The challenge. The thrill

G2. The thrill and the joy

G3. Yeh, the challenge.

G4. Personally I don't like challenges but I just love it

B1. Like, It's just the way dance makes you feel, like, I can't imagine doing anything else.

**So when you say challenge, what do you mean by the challenge?**

G3. Like, you want to be your best and you watch what other people do and think like I want to be able to do that or I want to try and be better.

G4. It the technical bits, like trying to do even a plie perfectly. An arabesque perfectly

G5. You want to be a better dancer. You want to be as good as everyone else.

G3. You work harder because you want to be better. You work hard because you want to prove to yourself and the teacher that you can do it. You can then get better parts and better corrections.

B1. You work harder because you want to be there. You get inspiration from the feedback you get.

**What attracts you? Is it fame, travel, what is it?**

G2. Well ballet doesn't make you famous.

G3. Yes it does, what about Fonteyn?

B1. Just to be part of the ballet world.

G4. Everything you have to go thru to be a dancer – such an achievement to get there. You don't want to be a superstar or anything. Just to be there.

G5. Yeh, like it would be great to get to prima ballerina or like a soloist.

B1. You do it cause you like it, like you don't get good pay, you live in horrible places, you do it cause its dance.

G2. There are a lot of sacrifices as well.

**Does anything about a career in ballet concern you? You know, when you talk to dancers, the stuff they say.**

G3. Yeh, injury

G2. Injury. It can be something so simple that finishes you off. Like look at XX, she like fell on her back in contemporary and hasn't been able to dance for like months. She was so amazing and like she now still only has like 25% movement. She will never be the way she was. She is not dancing to where we are now and she was so far ahead. Watching her in class she struggles to much and it's hard to watch. She can't jump and you know it hurts her.

**So injury scares you because it can finish your career?**

G2. It can like finish your career before its even started

G3. If your injured you might like lose your motivation and like get left behind. That's scary cause when your injured you miss out and you get left behind. You need something to drive you to keep going.

G4. Not getting a job.

G1. Like Lauren Thompson, she is an amazing dancers and she has like been trying for jobs everywhere and she can't get one, so if she can't, what does that mean for us?

B1. Yeh, like that's really scary. I was talking to her and she is like trying so hard and she is like so good and even she is not getting work. She's just not getting anything. What does that mean for me? It's like becoming a reality for me because I am like older. Im starting to think about these things. It freaks me out.

G2. But XX like helps us find jobs she knows which companies are right for us.

G3. Time is scary, like, most companies won't take you if you are over 18 and like I started here late and I'm already 17 and what happens if I'm not ready in a year I will like miss out 'cause no company will want me cause I'm too old. I'm worried about auditions and them not even looking at me because of my age. They want you so much younger these days.

G1. And like when you want to have kids you have to leave. Like, your body shape actually changes and when you have had a break you don't have your fitness. Too hard to try and do both.

G3. Would be really hard if your husband is a dancer too. Who would look after the kids?

G4. Keeping the motivation going – what happens if the knockbacks affects us?

B1 – like now in 2010 there is not really jobs in companies for dancers. There are not many positions left. Like for auditions you don't even get a chance to dance if you don't have the right look then they dismiss you.

**Does it scare you to go and work overseas?**

G5. No cause XX has always told us that is where the work is. Like there are so many companies in Europe and it's just part of their culture. Everyone dances over there. Here, we are like the odd ones out. When XX takes us on the tours we get to see the culture and the companies and it's not too much different to here.

**What about the language differences, does that scare you?**

B1. No, cause most of the companies are like so multicultural and everyone speaks a bit of everything. You don't need to know much. English is quite a common language

G3. You can pick it up as you go. Everyone is really friendly and you all speak the same language of dance anyway.

G1. Yeh, you can pick it up as you go round

G2. Yeh and like you know where you are going to get accepted so you like can study a bit before you go.

**If you look at your other friends – your own age – who are not studying ballet, is there anything that they are doing that you think you are missing out on? How does that make you feel?**

B1. Yeh, theyre all at home. Relaxing. Watching tv on the sofa.

G4. Just missing out on friends. Yeh friends.and time

G1. Miss out on sleep.

G2. Yeh, and not doing anything.

G5. Like having a whole weekend – Saturday and Sunday to do what you want

G3. Yeh all I do is dance, study, drive my car home, sleep, get up to dance

G4. Then on Sundays we have to catch up with school work.

G2. Yeh the school work

G3. It's hard when you get texts from your old school friends to catch up and you can't

**Do you get to maintain your friendships from school?**

G1. No

G2. Nup

B1. I don't see anyone that I went to school with

G4. I have a couple of close friends who I grew up with and they like live in my street so I get to see them when I am at home.

G3. I'm like 17 so I'm lucky that I had some good friendships and got to do stuff before I came here

B1. I miss the couch

G4. Everyone here becomes your family like we all do everything together

G3. Yeh, when I came here straight from school I couldn't believe how mature everyone was. There is like no bitching everyone is competitive over parts and can like get into arguments and bitchy about who should have got it but then we are not nasty to each other.

G5. We go out together and to the movies and stuff.

G4. It's really good here. I was with XX and that was like so bitchy and horrible. Everyone was really nasty to each other and I hated it. It's so different here.

**Where do you think your best career opportunities are and why?**

G2. They are not here. Europe and America.

G1. Yeh

G5. Yeh

G4. Like there are only two companies in Australia and if you're not what they are looking for then you will never get a job.

**Describe how dancing makes you feel**

G3. Amazing

G1. Like nothing else matters.

G5. Sometimes you like get up in the morning and like don't want to go but when you get here and start to dance you feel so good

G4. You go into your own world

B1. Amazing – best feeling in the world

**Describe what you like about some of your leaders/ mentors/teachers here.**

G2. The best ones are like the ones that come in really energetic and motivated. Like one is always like that and you try really hard to please her and get really motivated yourself.

G1. Yeh – also they have lots of experience and knowledge

G3. Yeh and the one who doesn't just tell you what to do – she like shows you everything stands in front of you to show you exactly how it should be

G2. I like the ones who shout because that gets you motivated to improve

G4. I find it a bit scary but it then gets you going one shouts a lot though

B1. I don't – I think this place can be too negative sometimes – too much negative and little positive shouting at you all the time about what you are doing wrong

G2. I like that – I know where to improve and it motivates me

G3. I like it too

**How long do you think you will be able to sustain a career?**

B1. For as long as I can

G3. Til my 30s maybe 40

G5. Not that long

G4. But others did, Martha Graham danced til her 60s and she was like dancing good

G3. When I want to have kids it will be over then I will go to uni and do something else I am passionate about

G5. Yeh but it's hard to find something else with the same passion

B1. I will still stay in dance – maybe dance teacher

G2. Some courses like at WAAPA do stuff on stage design or make up or stuff like that

G1. Yeh and even make up

B1. Yeh and like you can do other things instead of dancing but stay in the dance world

**If you choose to have a family later on in life, do you think this will impact on your career in ballet? How?**

G3. It will be too hard to balance so will go and do something else

G2. Yeh it's impossible to have your career have kids and then like come back. Like you will never be at the level you were at before. That would be too hard and I couldn't do it – going backwards and like just being part of the core and like being with dancers who have better roles who weren't like as good as you were when you left.

G1. Yeh it would be too hard to come back and be at the same level.

G5. That's why I'm like going to wait til I'm 30 or something so like my career is nearly over anyway and it like doesn't matter as much

B1. Harder for the girls because their bodies change and they have to take too long a break

**So if you decided that you would change your career after having children what would you do?**

G3. I would think about it and like find an area of study I liked. I would look at what else I wanted to do.

G3. Like I would look at teaching

B1 – yeah I would actually love to set up my own dance school or like be a director of a school or something.

G2. Yeh – that would be great

G5. I don't really know what I would do. Maybe I would look at the sort of things I could study, look at an area and then look for something from there

G1. The thing is we are all the same you know we all love dance and would like to stay in the industry but we just don't really know like what's going to happen.

**So would you go and do something different?**

G4. I would follow my passion

G5. I would stay in the same industry

G3. I would still want that mental and physical challenge

B1. Yeh I would stay in the industry – like it has to be something to do with dance. Maybe production or something like that

G1. I would teach

G2. Teach

G3. When I think about what would I do I don't really know like what I would do. That why I would pick an area and then go and study it and find something from there

G2. I would marry someone rich! (laugh)

G5. Would still look for a challenge

B – I would see myself working in this industry until the day I die. Like there's nothing stopping us doing something in the industry like teaching until like 60

**Well I really appreciate your time and see it was quite painless! So thank you so much and thanks for being so honest that was fantastic**

**Time: 48 minutes**

## APPENDIX 5

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### **Dancers-in-Training Focus Group One Memo (NVivo)**

In comparison the secondary school students focus groups, the dancers in training were fairly quiet, structured and orderly in the way they answered questions. I am assuming this comes from training and studying for a number of years in a very structured environment. With the school students, they interrupted each other, butted in, disagreed etc which was considered normal for the age group being interviewed. With this group, they each waited their turn to answer, going around the group, and there was a great deal of 'like' thinking. They also appeared to be more focussed and knew exactly what they wanted from their career and did not appear to have 'stars in their eyes' about the challenges their chosen career may have in store for them.

#### **Linked Item**

Internals\\Interviews\\Dancers in Training Focus Group 1



## APPENDIX 6

### Job Retention Checklist

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

This checklist has been developed using the feedback from the first phase on the study on the reasons for career choice as well as from existing literature in the areas of employee retention and satisfaction.

Please rank each of the checklist factors from 1 through to 21, with '1' being the most important reason you stay, followed by '2' and so on.

INTERESTING WORK	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
IMAGE/STATUS	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
MONEY	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONTROL/AUTONOMY OVER WORK	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORK COLLEAGUES	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORK HOURS	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONDITIONS OF WORK	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLEXIBILITY	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
TEAMWORK	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORK ENVIRONMENT	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
CREATIVITY OPPORTUNITIES	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
SELF FULFILMENT	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
PASSION FOR JOB	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
CHALLENGE	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRAVEL	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
LEADERS/MENTORS	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECOGNITION	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPANY ETHICS/VALUES	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER (Specify):	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX 7

### NVivo Case Classification Spreadsheet

Age Group	Country of Birth	Name	No. of years ballet training	Occupation	Part time work	Qualification	School Type	Sex	State of Residence	Year at School	Yrs Current Employer with
35-39	Australia	P3DT1	10-14	f/t dance teacher	Not Applicable	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Victoria	Not Applicable	Unassigned
46-49	Australia	P3DT2	15+	f/t dance teacher	Not Applicable	High School certificate	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	More than 5 yrs
15	Australia	P1D11	10-14	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Male	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1D12	0-4	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S13	10-14	f/t dance student	yes	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1D14	10-14	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1D15	10-14	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S16	5-9	p/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1D21	5-9	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1D22	5-9	f/t dance student	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Female	Unassigned	Distance education	Unassigned
25-29	Unassigned	P2E1	Not Applicable	HR Advisor	Not Applicable	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
22-24	Not Applicable	P2E2	Not Applicable	HR Advisor	Not Applicable	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
25-29	Australia	P2E3	10-14	Arts Director	no	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
25-29	Australia	P2E4	Not Applicable	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Diploma	Not Applicable	Female	NSW	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
25-29	Australia	P2E5	Not Applicable	OSH Advisor	Not Applicable	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Male	WA	Not Applicable	3-5 yrs
25-29	Australia	P2E6	Not Applicable	HR Advisor	Not Applicable	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
17	Australia	P1S41	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S42	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S43	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S44	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S45	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S11	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S12	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned

## NVivo Case Classification Spreadsheet (Continued)

Age Group	Country of Birth	Name	No. of years ballet training	Occupation	Part time work	Qualification	School Type	Sex	State of Residence	Year at School	Yrs Current Employer with
14	Australia	P1S13	Unassigned	school student	no	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S14	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S15	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
14	Australia	P1S16	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Female	Unassigned	Year 10	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S31	Unassigned	school student	no	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S32	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S33	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S34	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S35	Unassigned	school student	no	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S36	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	private	Male	Unassigned	Year 12	Unassigned
16	Other	P1S21	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Female	Unassigned	Year 11	Unassigned
17	Australia	P1S22	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Female	Unassigned	Year 11	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S23	Unassigned	school student	no	Unassigned	public	Female	Unassigned	Year 11	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S24	Unassigned	school student	no	Unassigned	public	Female	Unassigned	Year 11	Unassigned
16	Australia	P1S25	Unassigned	school student	yes	Unassigned	public	Female	Unassigned	Year 11	Unassigned
18-21	Australia	P2D1	10-14	f/t dancer	no	Unassigned	Not Applicable	Male	Victoria	Not Applicable	Unassigned
25-29	Australia	P2D2	10-14	p/t dancer	no	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	1-2yrs
22-24	Australia	P2D3	15+	f/t dancer	Not Applicable	High School certificate	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	Less than 1 year
25-29	Australia	P2D4	15+	p/t dancer	yes	Diploma	Not Applicable	Female	NSW	Not Applicable	1-2yrs
25-29	Australia	P2D5	15+	f/t dancer	Not Applicable	High School certificate	Not Applicable	Female	NSW	Not Applicable	3-5 yrs
30-34	Australia	P3RD1	15+	retired dancer	Not Applicable	Undergraduate degree	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	1-2yrs
25-29	Australia	P3RD3	15+	retired dancer	no	Diploma	Not Applicable	Female	NSW	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
46-49	Australia	P3RD3	15+	retired dancer	Not Applicable	High School certificate	Not Applicable	Female	WA	Not Applicable	More than 5 yrs

## APPENDIX 8



**Research Ethics Office**  
Division of Research and Development

[www.murdoch.edu.au](http://www.murdoch.edu.au)

Chancellery Building  
South Street  
MURDOCH WA 6150  
Telephone: 9360 6677  
Facsimile: 9360 6686  
[human.ethics@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@murdoch.edu.au)  
[www.research.murdoch.edu.au/ethics](http://www.research.murdoch.edu.au/ethics)

Friday, 19 October 2007

Dr Brenda Scott-Ladd  
Division of Arts  
Murdoch University

Dear Brenda,

<b>Permit No.</b>	2007/253
<b>Project Title</b>	The Role of Intrinsic Rewards in the Retention of Employees in the Performing Arts: A Case Study of Ballet Dancers Employed in Australian Ballet Companies

Your application in support of the above project, received on 9/28/2007, was reviewed by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Decision of Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee:

### APPROVED

Permits are granted for three years. You will need to submit an annual report to the Research Ethics Office. Please note you are required to report immediately any unforeseen or adverse events especially if they might affect the ethical standing of the project. Once the project has been completed, please submit a Permit Closure Report. All forms are available on the Research Ethics web-site.

I wish you every success for your research.

**Please quote your ethics permit number in all correspondence.**

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. von Dietze".

Dr. Erich von Dietze  
Manager of Research Ethics

CRICOS Provider Code: 00125J  
ABN 61 616 369 313

# APPENDIX 9



Curtin University

## Form C

### Application for Approval of Research with Low Risk (Ethical Requirements)

Office Use Only: Date Added to Database: 6/5/11 Application No: SOM-11-12

This form should be completed by students/staff undertaking research involving humans with low risk, defined as "research where participants have the potential to suffer no harm, but where there is potential to suffer only inconvenience or discomfort". Research may not commence without written notification of approval. This form must be submitted along with the checklist in the Application Guidelines. Please complete this document electronically save it, print it, and have it signed, then submit it.

Please note that if your application involving humans is not classed as low risk you will need to complete a Form A "Application for Ethical Approval of Human Research" <http://research.curtin.edu.au/ethics/human.cfm#application>

## SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

1. Investigator Name(s) Jane Coffey ID Number 167341B  
Supervisor Name (if applicable) Assoc. Prof. Brenda Scott-Ladd ID Number 182962E  
Telephone 0401103117 Email j.coffey@curtin.edu.au  
Mailing Address School of Management, CBS, Building 408, Room 3043  
School/Department School of Management, CBS

2. Project Title Youth Career Choices: A Comparison of Industry and Ballet

3. Plain English summary of Project (maximum 100 words)

The focus of this PhD study is on the career choices of young people in Australia: the job attraction drivers; career aspirations; and retention drivers and levers for early career employees. The nature of the performing arts, and specifically ballet, as an organisational context, will also be examined.

4. Aims of Project (maximum 100 words)

The purpose of this PhD is to investigate and provide answers to the research questions posed. The aims of this thesis are:

- To analyse the existing literature on career attraction and retention expectations and drivers, the role of generational differences in the workplace, and the nature of the industry and career for professional ballet dancers;
- To conduct a comparative analysis and investigation of career values, drivers and aspirations of young people in full time training and early career roles in ballet and other sectors of Australian industry;
- To analyse the specific drivers and motives which lead to improved employee retention in these industries/companies;
- To discuss the research findings and draw conclusions on the significant attraction and career retention drivers for young people; and
- To outline the significance of this study for employers and future research opportunities.

Addressing each of these aims in the thesis will allow a thorough exploration of the research questions.



## APPENDIX 10



Department for Child Protection  
Government of Western Australia

000087

MS JANE SARAH COFFEY  
10 LIDDELL HEIGHTS  
LEEMING WA 6149

12 November 2007

Dear MS JANE SARAH COFFEY

Your application for a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) has been approved and your WWC Card is enclosed. This card lasts for 3 years and is valid across all categories of child-related work, provided you are not charged with or convicted of certain offences during this time (see the back of this letter for **Important Information** about these offences and what you should do).

Your employer or the people you provide services to are entitled to ask to see your card before allowing you to carry out child-related work.

If you are still in child-related work in 3 years time you will need to apply for a new card to continue your work with children.

Please tell the Working with Children Screening Unit if your contact or employer details change. This will make sure that only you and your current employer/s receive important notices regarding your WWC Check.

To find out more about Working with Children Checks and what your responsibilities are, or to change contact details, you can visit our website at [www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au](http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au), phone on (08) 6217 8100 or 1800 883 979 (for country callers), email at [checkquery@dcd.wa.gov.au](mailto:checkquery@dcd.wa.gov.au) or write to PO Box 1262, West Perth, 6872.

Thank you for your doing your part to help keep children safe.

Yours sincerely

Sandie van Soelen  
Director, Working with Children Screening Unit