

PERSONNEL SPECIALISTS IN SCOTLAND: A STUDY
OF MANAGERIAL WORK AND KNOWLEDGE USE

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ABSTRACT

This study explored two main themes: the work of personnel specialists and how they do it, and the nature of the knowledge used in personnel management. The issues of ambiguity and role, power and influence, political behaviour, and status and effectiveness in personnel were also examined.

Data were obtained from personnel specialists (229 respondents and 109 interviewees), and from 15 non-specialist senior executive interviewees. These samples were drawn from 27 activity classifications, to represent a wide cross-section of personnel specialists in Scotland.

The study obtained data about personnel specialists' backgrounds, their modes of entry to the personnel occupation, their employing organizations, and their jobs. The respondents' work was analysed to find out both what was done, and how it was done. This covered both the 'managerial work' elements of their jobs, and their participation in political behaviour. The study also explored how personnel specialists obtain and update the knowledge they use in their work.

The concerns of the study were broad, and some of the findings re-affirm earlier writings about personnel/managerial work, in respect of fragmentation in the work, its diversity, and the heterogeneity of practitioners' backgrounds. In occupational entry, five sub-modes were found to augment Watson's (1977) typology. The model of knowledge use has more elements than Guest and Kenny (1983) described in their analysis of knowledge

which is relevant to personnel work.

The findings about personnel specialists' perceptions of the 'in between' role re-affirm Mackay and Torrington's (1986) view that the managerial role model is the prevalent one in personnel.

The study's main contribution is in the managerial work aspects of the respondents' jobs, and the relative involvement of Mintzberg's (1973) roles in personnel work. Further, although political behaviour has been discussed in the personnel literature, this study has provided information about the political awareness of personnel specialists, and the means they use to secure their political ends.

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DECLARATION

Parts of the data which were obtained by this study were used in the paper,

PATERSON, B.E., MARTIN, G., and GLOVER, I.A., (1988) "Who Incorporates Whom? Managerialism versus Professionalism Amongst a Sample of Personnel Specialists in Scotland", Paper prepared for the Sixth Annual Aston/UMIST Conference on the Organisation and Control of the Labour Process, University of Aston, March 1988.

The paper included a brief summary of the sample composition and method, and of data about the respondents' backgrounds and employers. Some of the interview quotations which were presented in the paper in connection with role ambiguity and political behaviour are reported in this thesis. Other than these quotations, and some from relevant literature, the two documents do not have text in common.

This thesis has not been presented for a comparable or other academic award, nor has any part of it been so presented, either in isolation or as part of a larger work.

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the reality of personnel management in Scotland. According to Tyson and Fell (1986: 32);

"there is ample discussion about what personnel specialists ought to do, and little about what they actually do".

The question of what personnel specialists actually do is central to this study. Its scope, however, goes beyond merely examining personnel management as a part of management-level work. Its other major theme is the nature of the knowledge used in personnel work, and how it is used. It is hoped that the data presented and discussed here will contribute to understanding of the practice of personnel management, and indicate the directions in which education and training for it might usefully move.

In order to understand the nature and role of personnel work, and of knowledge use within it, it was necessary to explore its context. To do this, topics have been isolated and explored. These include the power and influence, the status, and the effectiveness of personnel management, topics which would need to be covered in anything but a very basic account of the tasks of a management-level occupation.

Two other themes, ambiguity and role, have also been addressed. These have received a considerable amount of attention in the personnel management literature. The remainder of the data obtained - mainly respondents' biographical details and organizational information - are the factual 'back-bone' on

which much of the flesh of the study is built.

While a gap exists between theory and practice in the personnel literature, there is a similar one in the literature on managerial work. When the study was formulated, there was already a fairly substantial literature on the latter subject. This influenced the parameters of the study as one which might make a contribution to that literature, although the primary subject is the personnel occupation and its work. The political dimension of managerial work was of particular interest, and the study sought to explore the extent to which personnel specialists are aware of political activity in their jobs, and further, the means which they use to obtain their political ends.

While there is a slowly growing body of knowledge in the general area of managerial work, some of which includes useful fragments of data on personnel specialists, very little research has been conducted in the field of personnel management as (narrowly -defined) managerial work, apart from a study of a part of the National Health Service and a large private company (Guest and Horwood, 1980), a much earlier study of the use of time (Beishon and Palmer, 1970), and a very small-scale project (Honey, 1976).

There has been no single study of personnel management as a type or component of managerial work, which obtained data from respondents employed by a wide range of organizations in both public and private sectors. Nor has there been a study of this type which concentrated solely on Scotland. The research which

is reported here fulfils both of these criteria. It is not, however, a study of 'Scottish' personnel specialists, but rather one which concerns personnel specialists who work in Scotland. While Scotland has a historically defined national identity, it was not the primary intention of the research to elicit results which would isolate them in a Scottish context. Thus, Scotland has been treated almost as if it were an exceptionally large region, rather than as a country per se , within which regional variations may exist.

According to Timperley and Osbaldeston (1975), it is important to possess an awareness of a region's economic and social attributes, as these can affect such things as patterns of employment, and the scale and nature of the personnel function within particular organizations. Because employment in Scotland has tended to shift from coal-mining, shipbuilding, iron and steel, and heavy engineering to oil, electronics, and services, these points are of particular interest. Scott and Hughes (1976) suggested that the feature of external ownership (especially by American companies), was highest in oil and electronics, which at that time were the newer, relatively fast-growing sectors of the Scottish economy.

The literature review which follows comprises three chapters, which reflect the major themes and issues concerning this study. Chapter 1 considers writings on managerial work. It notes how traditional management theories and concepts were shown to have a strongly normative quality by the findings of empirical

research into managerial work, and how understanding of the relevant phenomena has grown considerably in sophistication and scope since the 1970s.

The focus of Chapter 2 is the occupation and practice of personnel management. It deals with matters such as occupational identity, professionalisation, ambiguity, role, power and influence, status, and effectiveness.

Chapter 3 reviews material on knowledge use in management in general, and in personnel management in particular. Further, it shows how strongly the practical relevance of social scientific knowledge has been asserted in the standard literature on personnel management, at the apparent expense of other kinds of knowledge needed in personnel. It also considers the ways in which personnel and other managers learn and develop.

The research report comprises seven chapters. The majority of the biographical and organizational data are presented in Chapter 4, which considers the respondents' current and previous employment together with their educational backgrounds and modes of entry into personnel work. An analysis of the tasks or activities which comprise personnel work is reported in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 examines personnel management as managerial work, and how personnel specialists perform the 'managerial' aspects of their jobs. They are however, not only occupational specialists but also members of their organizations' management structures,

and Chapter 7 reports data in the context of personnel as management. Chapter 8 looks at political behaviour and role ambiguity. The focus of Chapter 9 is how personnel specialists accumulate knowledge.

The types of knowledge used in personnel management are reported in Chapter 10, which also considers the relevance of the social sciences to personnel work. A summary of the main findings of Chapters 4 to 10 and the general conclusions are presented in Chapter 11.

CHAPTER ONE : MANAGERS AND THEIR WORK

Introduction: Managers and Management

Although the terms 'manager' and 'management', have achieved common usage in our vocabulary, there is a lack of widespread agreement on their meaning.

The notion of managers as forming a broadly homogeneous occupational and/or social grouping was questioned by Anthony (1977), who argued that "it is altogether too simple" to think of managers in this way (cf. also Melrose-Woodman, 1978; Pincus, 1967; and Nealey and Fiedler, 1968). Child and Ellis (1973) expressed serious doubt concerning "the validity and utility of 'the manager' as a generalized concept", and felt that it might be advantageous to move away from it.

Problems are also inherent in the notion of management. Lawrence (1986) argued that to define management as an activity was "not difficult or even particularly controversial". There was difficulty however, "in distinguishing between management as an activity, a subject, and an idea". In attempting to define management, Drucker (1977) suggested that it was a "social function, embedded in a tradition of values, customs and beliefs, and in governmental and political systems". For Drucker, management was a practice, "a culture", "not a value-free science", or a profession.

Glover (1979) suggested that the "umbrella term" management was "only a status", whereas engineering, marketing and surveying

for example, were "functions". Clearly, Harbison and Myers (1959) thought of management as a status: they explained that it was at once, an economic resource, an elite social grouping and a system of power and authority.

Gowler and Legge (1983: 197) defined management as, "that segment of the semantic order (subculture) of contemporary English-speaking societies which is characterised by the language of efficiency and control". Lawrence (1986:14) reminded us that "managing is an element in most jobs" - that it is "not an absolute...but a continuum", and it is "an idea which exists in the minds of men".

Some of the foregoing might be seen as tending to suggest various things that 'management' is not, rather than what it is. Problems of definition arise, once the concept is removed from the constraints of vernacular usage. Earl (1983) however, suggested that most managers and management academics do recognise that management is an activity in its own right, and that management "cannot be residual, intermittent, or ad hoc". Nevertheless, Glover and Martin (1986) were critical of "the notion that it is sensible or useful to describe members of diverse occupations as managers and to assume that there exists a discrete set of tasks called management for them to perform". This was because the jobs of those who plan, organize and supervise work were so diverse, and because their tasks existed primarily as specialist ones, that it seemed more useful to those authors to understand these diverse and specialist needs

rather than the 'managerial' elements which existed in virtually all human activities.

Drucker (1973) would appear to have been roughly correct in his analysis of the terms 'manager' and 'management'. They "are slippery, to say the least". Glover (1979) suggested that the "vagueness" of the terms was "well worth emphasising", while Wilmott (1984) contended that there was "conceptual ambiguity" associated with the terms 'manager' and 'management'. Wilmott clarified this by saying that it was possible to be engaged in 'management' without being a 'manager'. The ambiguity arose because 'management', "in the sense of reflexive social action, is intrinsic to human agency". Managers, however, were "institutionally empowered to determine and/or regulate certain aspects of the actions of others". This is in accord with Glover's (1979) definition of managers as all those involved in planning, organizing and supervising the work of others, as members of a 'managerial stratum', which contained a mixture of line 'doers' and staff 'thinkers'.

The difficulty experienced in coming to grips with the terms 'manager' and 'management' might suggest a sense of foreboding when we try to define managerial work, for we may hear or read the tautological statement that managerial work is the performance of the activity of 'management' by 'managers'. Once we introduce the words, 'slippery', 'vague', and 'heterogeneous' in relation to these concepts, we realise that their parameters may not be solid, but something altogether more fluid. This

insight may, however, be a useful one for enhancing our understanding of the nature of managerial work.

We shall now consider traditional management theory, the theoretical base for the 'science' of management, which existed before any empirical research had been conducted in the field of managerial work (Fores, 1985; Fores and Glover, 1976).

Traditional Management Theory

Wilmott's (1984) description of early management theory as "founding images and ideals" was a useful one in considering the influence of writers such as Taylor (1911), Fayol (1949), and Barnard (1938), on subsequent managerial literature, much of which was normative and prescriptive. The concept of an ideal in management, as a state to be achieved by 'application' of the prescribed principles, was a recurrent theme which has percolated through the literature from Taylor to the present day.

F.W. Taylor's ideas had a major influence on the conceptualisation both of 'scientific management', and of the manager as an agent of control. The rationale of his thinking was, in essence, to secure the maximization of efficiency by means of standardising production and related tasks, and by separating socially, as well as in practice, the tasks of planning and execution. It is not intended here to conduct a detailed analysis of Taylor's writings. Rather, the primary focus is the importance of Taylor as the originator of a philosophy of management, and as a source of considerable

influence on subsequent thinking about management as an activity.

At first glance, this 'focus' may seem marginally displaced in relation to Taylor's writing, as he wrote relatively little about 'pure' management, that is, about executive-level work as a phenomenon separate from the planning and supervision of operative work in engineering/production. However, several pervading and persistent concepts commonly associated with the role of management can be traced partly to Taylor. These include the idea that managers have a right to manage; that management is, or should be, a relatively ordered, rational, controlled and controlling activity; and that managerial objectives can be achieved by the 'application' of 'scientific' management techniques. This latter point has provided legitimacy for the later development of quantitative techniques of management science.

'Taylorism' has been the source of some debate in the labour process literature. Wilmott (1984) concluded that, while the flames of critical social scientific debate were powerfully fanned by Braverman (1974), "more worthy related studies" could be found in Friedman (1977), Burawoy (1979), and Clawson (1980), and that "some of the more illuminating commentaries" were offered in Stark (1980), and Cressey and McInness (1980).

The question of control is fundamental to discussion of management. The nature and historical growth of managerial control has been discussed by Braverman (1974), Marglin (1974),

Edwards (1979), Hill (1981), Salaman (1981), Littler (1982), and Storey (1983, 1985), most of whom came close to discussing the control of labour as if it were the major function of management. On the other hand, and writing about management in the present, Child (1985) questioned whether managerial strategies - particularly as suggested by Braverman (1974) and Edwards (1979) - were "formulated with labour's role in the productive process primarily in mind". Instead, Child suggested that such a consideration "could be quite secondary", and possibly "merely consequential upon other decisions". He did, however, add that managerial policies formulated primarily to attain other objectives might not be inconsequential for the labour process.

Fayol's (1916, 1949) views on management have permeated thinking about management as a subject, in a manner similar to those of Taylor (1911). Fayol's maxim, "planning, organizing, coordinating, commanding, controlling", subsequently expanded by Gulick (1937) into 'POSDCORB'- planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgetting - prescribed the role of the manager as the master at the helm, making a stately progress towards organizational goals. Mintzberg (1975), however, suggested that the elements in Fayol's maxim "at best...indicate some vague objectives managers have when they work".

Classical management theory, with its emphasis on pyramids and spans of control, accountability, authority and responsibility,

unity of command, and (to some extent) centralisation, gave a credibility to the function of managing, and thus importance and status to the title 'manager'. It also emphasised qualities of leadership, and rational decision-making, and it is thus possibly no surprise that many managers, anxious to be competent in their jobs, would want to embrace such 'theory', and be prompted to try to 'apply' it.

Stewart (1983: 82) produced a neat part-summary of the disparity between traditional management theory and the reality of managerial work:

"The traditional picture of managerial work, and one that underlies many management theories, is of rationality, planning, and pursuit of organizational goals. These characteristics have been seen as applying to all managers. The studies of managerial behaviour suggest a different picture".

Managerial Work - Empirical Research

The first empirical input to this 'different picture' was provided by Carlson's (1951), diary study of nine Swedish chief executives. Their lengthy working days were fragmented; they rarely worked without interruption either from telephone calls or visitors. Just under 80% of their time was spent working with others, in meetings, conferences and discussions; only 10% was spent alone. Information-gathering took up most of their time.

Thus, the predictable and rational top businessman was a myth, or at least part-fiction. There was not enough time to plan and reflect. Carlson queried whether managers chose a fragmented

way of working, perhaps to keep abreast of current information, or alternatively, to prevent boredom. Mintzberg (1973) suggested that managers like fragmented work patterns because they alleviate boredom.

Carlson's (1951) findings provided serviceable indicators for the course of future studies in managerial work. A number of diary studies ensued in the 1950s and 1960s, predominantly British ones.

In a summary of "Major Studies of the Manager's Job", Mintzberg (1973, Appendix A) provided a useful critique of the diary studies of Burns (1954, 1957), Copeman (1963), Dubin and Spray (1964), Horne and Lupton (1965), Thomason (1966) and Stewart (1967). Further, he described the observational studies of Kelly (1964, 1969), Ponder (1957), Guest (1956), and Jasinski (1956). He also commented critically on the work of Stieglitz (1969), because the researcher had "abdicated his responsibility to the manager" by allowing managers to "give back...what they find most prevalent in the literature - POSDCORB".

Mintzberg was, however, much kinder in his assessment of Sayles (1964), whose work clearly inspired his own. Despite some initial criticisms, he suggested that Sayles "is one of the few researchers whose writings demonstrate that he appreciates the complexities inherent in managerial work".

The variety of managerial tasks and behaviour is apparent from the findings of research which are discussed below. Key themes

which emerged both from the earliest, and from virtually all subsequent studies, indicated that managerial work, usually in the UK and the USA, tended to have very varied, fragmented, episodic, opportunistic, and reactive qualities. The notion of contingency was also seen to be highly relevant, with particular managerial jobs being subject to a virtually infinitely wide range of demands and constraints, and offering a correspondingly wide range of choices.

Many managers were also seen to spend major parts of their time in verbal, face-to-face communication. They relied upon networks to obtain, to work upon and disseminate information, and they routinely engaged in political behaviour.

Before we examine a selection of studies from which these key themes arose, it is worthwhile considering what these themes tell us about managerial work. They tell us how managerial work is conducted, but nothing about the managerial tasks which generate/are the end product of the types of managerial behaviour outlined above - for example, the tasks contained in the 'POSDCORB' maxim. The 'different picture' noted by Stewart (1983) is then, perhaps only a different view of the overall picture that is managerial work. The studies discussed below showed that managers' progress towards organizational goals was not the stately affair depicted in traditional management theory.

Fragmentation

Managerial work was characterised by "brevity, fragmentation,

and verbal communication" (Mintzberg, 1975). Brewer and Tomlinson's (1964) study observed the "erratic pattern" of managerial work, its "verbal process", and the "obtaining and systematizing of information". Their managers spent a great deal of time talking "on the feet", were rarely alone, and lacked contact with their superiors. Their results were comparable to those of Carlson (1951) and Burns (1954), with regard to time spent talking, and being spoken to. Brewer and Tomlinson (1964) further suggested that the daily problems dealt with by managers might mean the neglect of future planning and new techniques.

According to Mintzberg (1973) and Stewart (1976), fragmented working days were partly self-imposed. Stewart (1983) commented further, that "the reason for this fragmentation, self-imposed or not, could be important for our understanding of managerial behaviour". She observed that Mintzberg "seems to be arguing that even self-imposed fragmentation is not really a choice, but a necessary condition of managerial work", and she suggested several additional possible explanations for the fragmented pattern of managers' work: the need to be available, the difficulty in breaking the habit of working in a fragmented way, and the habit of switching attention instead of concentrating on one subject at a time. Stewart (1981) had earlier noted the "marked fragmentation of most managerial work", and the tendency of managers to be "reactive and to rely much of their time on habit and instinct". Their behaviour was "frequently responding and opportunistic" (Stewart, 1983).

The problems of "grasshopping through days that are divided into fragmented short episodes" (Honey, 1976), and the attendant immediate pressures which precluded the concept of planning to the extent that it became a "luxury" (Johnston, 1978), made it all too clear why managers "must learn to cope with disorder" (Mant, 1976).

When we consider the apparent 'disorder' in managerial work, it is difficult to separate the terms 'fragmentation' and 'variety' as each seem to contribute to the other. Stewart's (1967) study which concerned differences and similarities in the ways in which managers spent their time, suggested that there were variations in work characteristics amongst the managers studied. A number of common characteristics were found to be experienced by some, but not all, managers; the work was fragmented, discussion averaged 60% of their time, only 34% of their time was spent alone, and the work of the managers was varied, "in the place of work, in the contacts, and in its activities, and in its content". Mintzberg (1973), however, criticised Stewart for making "almost no attempt to study work content", the types of task in which the managers were engaged, and which generated the interaction with others.

Child and Ellis (1973) also criticised Stewart's (1967) diary studies, because they did not provide "a particularly systematic analysis of the potential environmental influences on managerial roles and behaviour". Lawrence (1986), however, went some way towards redressing the balance of criticism by suggesting that

Stewart "very cleverly shows that the degree of variety itself varies", that she was able to show the same feature in the subject of fragmentation, and "treated variety and fragmentation as variables rather [than] fundamentals of managerial work".

In his study of very senior American executives with multi-functional or multidivisional responsibilities, Kotter (1982a) used the ideas of "agenda setting", "network building", and "the efficiency of seemingly inefficient behaviour". The first concept indicated that managers could act constructively to impose their own personalities and experiences, as well as order, in their working lives. The second suggested very strongly that effective communication was vital for securing information, and essential for the performance of managerial work. By keeping a finger on the 'pulse' of the organization, managers could perform their jobs better.

Verbal Communication

McFarland (1962: 116) argued that it was important to recognise that:

"...the concept of communication includes not merely the formal or informal interchange of words or messages but the awareness on the part of each executive of a wide range of the attitudes, values, beliefs, and philosophies of the other".

Dubin and Spray's (1964) study found that the majority of executive communication was verbal, and face-to-face. There was very little uniformity in the way in which time was spent, by the type of activity. The flow of work took preference over other motives for interaction. Thus, Dubin and Spray argued for

" a technological determinism of working behaviour". Further, they suggested that the skills required for effective face-to-face communication were substantially different to those required for written or telephone communication, as "gestures and intonation aid in communicating intent and meaning". In addition, communication was modified by "cues" obtained from the responses of the other person.

According to Pruitt and Lewis (1975), accuracy in communication could be increased by reactions, which helped to clarify and/or intensify meaning. Glueck (1977) noted that face-to-face verbal communication could involve one person or more, took longer, and involved more decision-making than telephone communication which though shorter in duration, involved more information exchange. Verbal communication, "a major work activity of managers", was likely to be a "preferred means of communication when those involved desire immediate reactions or feed-back from others to a message they convey" (Whitely, 1984). Thus, the "seemingly inefficient behaviour" outlined by Kotter (1982a) would appear to have positive advantages over other methods of information-gathering and exchange.

On the basis that "very little is known about what managers and others in supervisory positions actually do", Beishon and Palmer (1972) conducted a study of managerial behaviour using radio transmitters and observer monitoring techniques, on five managers and one supervisor in different industries. The managers' patterns of activity were "surprisingly similar over a

wide range of different jobs". Although they were engaged in work which was "quite different technically... the proportion of time spent in different activities [was] much the same". In a similar vein, Whitely's study (1984) reported findings that 58% of managers' recorded activities involved verbal communication, which were similar to Stewart's (1976) finding of 67%, and Burns' (1954) of 57%.

Thus, it is clear that talking and listening are integral features of managerial work in which interpersonal skills are important. According to Burgoyne and Stuart (1976), "in a sense this is a truism". Nevertheless, the centrality of face-to-face encounters in managerial work, also noted by Torrington (1982), indicates that those managers whose interpersonal skills are deficient will find themselves at a disadvantage when faced with more proficient communicators.

The fact that managers spend a substantial proportion of their time in interpersonal, largely face-to-face interaction, however, presents only the method of seeking or giving information. Mahoney et al (1965) argued that while studies of managerial work emphasised the importance of telephone, oral and written communication, and thus the 'how' of interaction, they did not provide an explanation of the purpose and nature of the work being performed. Beishon and Palmer (1972) made a similar point regarding the reasons for the interaction, while in a broadly similar vein, Stewart (1981) commented that it is of "little utility merely to observe that all managers necessarily

spend a lot of time talking to other people", and that it is the pattern of the manager's contacts that is relevant.

Building Networks

Sayles (1964) regarded the development and maintenance of particular patterns of relationships as "not optional, extra, or necessary as good human relations", but as "an integral part of the administrative task". The building and maintenance of a "predictable, reciprocating system of relationships" was, Sayles suggested, "the one enduring objective" of managers, despite the fact that the ideal could never be attained due to the "moving equilibrium", constant evolution and change, which presented managers with difficulties in introducing regularity in their relationships. Sayles observed that while managers could only approximate to the ideal by constant change, striving to attain it presented "the inherent challenge, the essential nature of managerial positions". In the search for stability, the manager

"endeavors to compensate and improvise, constantly to re-adjust his behavior, marginally, in response to the ever-changing environment about him".

(Sayles, 1964: 259)

Sayles noted that good managers "instinctively know" that there is no standard interface in relationships, and that they must "achieve a working pattern of give and take". Managers must understand relationships in their own organizations, and have the ability to "shape and utilise the person-to-person channels of communication, to influence, to persuade, to facilitate" (Horne and Lupton 1965).

While Sayles (1964) and Horne and Lupton (1965) did not expressly state that managers engage in political activity by manipulating relationships, it is clear from their descriptions of shaping and using communication channels, improvising, making marginal adjustments, persuading and influencing, that political activity is an intrinsic part of managers' relationships with others, pursued largely through the verbal medium.

Organization charts could not describe fully how organizations worked; nor could job descriptions describe exactly how individuals interacted with colleagues (Melcher, 1967). Thomason (1967) wrote that the overall hierarchy of an organization was comprised of "different subject-oriented communications networks", with their centre "lying at the point in the hierarchy to which the subject is allowed or required to penetrate". Thus, Pettigrew (1972) argued that merely highlighting the communications structure in any analysis of power relations was insufficient for understanding all that went on, as "placement in the communications structure needs to be linked to other forms of political access".

Despite Foy's (1983) description of networking as "the latest cult", there is nothing new about it. It is a normal human activity, carried into the field of organizational life. Both Mintzberg (1973) and especially Kotter (1982a) showed that networking was an integral feature of managerial work.

Networks for the manager can exist both inside and outside his/

her own employing organization. Whichever types of network a manager participates in, the reward is current relevant information which can be put to use in his/her job. Peters and Waterman (1982), thought that certain companies were "excellent" because of their "marvellously informal environments", where "rich communication" led to "more action, more experiments, more learning, and simultaneously to the ability to stay better in touch and on top of things".

Foy (1983) described a network as "an informal, nebulous, fuzzy thing", which "doesn't really like to be defined". She did, however, define it as "really fairly simple: it is a collection of people, usually with a specified realm of shared interest, who tend to keep in touch to exchange informal information". While this type of language may be appropriate to describe what some kinds of network are, and how they work, it also seems to detract from the importance of networks, particularly within organizations, as power bases.

This issue was addressed by Bacharach and Lawler (1980), who used a network metaphor to study sources of influence in organizations, to provide a "more complete political picture of the organizational system". In their view, "network imagery portrays the morphology of organizational politics at the aggregate level", and they discussed influence relationships as sources of organizational power, which did "not always coincide with the authority structure".

In identifying sources of influence, Bacharach and Lawler

regarded the links among key coalitions or interest groups as "critical". Their definition of a coalition "as a dense clustering of reciprocal relationships within any network" suggests something possibly more structured than the amorphous and apparently apolitical liaisons portrayed in other writings about networks.

Contingency

Stewart (1976) described many differences in managers' jobs, along with ways in which each manager was faced with a wide range of demands and constraints and a correspondingly wide range of choices needed to make the performance of his or her job possible. When we link these points with the ideas that managers shape, indeed manipulate, their working relationships, and that their behaviour is responding, adaptive and often opportunistic, the contingent nature of managerial work is apparent. While it might be argued that the political aspects of such 'shaping' can produce personal benefits like enhanced status through what Mintzberg (1985) called "technically illegitimate means", it is obvious from the foregoing that managers, of necessity, 'shape' relationships in order to do their jobs. In this event, "the only legitimacy that matters in the end is the output the organization is meant to generate and that means work" (Mant, 1977).

Clearly, the uncertainty produced by changing circumstances reinforces the contingent nature of managerial work (Bennett, 1981). Yet while Kotter (1982a) suggested that "a great deal"

of effective managerial behaviour was situation-specific, he also warned that his research did not support the view that this was "entirely" so.

Notions of contingency have been emphasised in studies of managerial work. Lawrence (1986) argued that, if we took as a "starting point" that management was a contingent activity, "coping with things that 'crop up' and which may 'foul up' the system unless dealt with...the reasons for the relative absence of planning, rational decision-making, systematic data-gathering and powerful analysis [were] all too clear". These missing elements were of course, the main concerns of the traditional, prescriptive and normative textbook approaches to management and decision-making.

Earl (1983) wrote that it was difficult to know "what 'management' is or should be", when empirical studies had shown that managers "do 'strange things', adopt simple rules, behave like non-managers, act politically, and even seek to limit, or work around formal systems and procedures". Lawrence (1986) however, argued that;

"all the things managers want to make happen involve other people, as means and ends. When you take this on board, the pattern of managerial activity is both clear and meaningful".

We shall next examine writings on power and influence, as they contain useful definitions for our later analysis of political behaviour.

Power and Influence

According to Lawrence and Lee (1984), "power is what makes things happen". French and Raven (1960) identified five power bases - reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert. Briefly, reward was the 'carrot'; coercive was the 'stick'; legitimate was where subordinates accepted the authority of the postholder's position; referent was where respect for, or identification with the postholder was shown; and expert depended on the postholder's abilities or knowledge (Lawrence and Lee, 1984).

Mechanic (1962) defined power as "any force that results in behaviour that would not have occurred if the force had not been present", and suggested that any analysis of power must consider the "power of norms as well as persons". Thus his definition of power was one of a "force rather than a relationship". Moreover, power was not a static condition, but one which could change with time (Yukl, 1989).

Shetty (1978) wrote that "much has been written on power and its classifications". His paper on managerial power and organizational effectiveness referred to nineteen sources, including Etzioni (1961), Mechanic (1962), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), and McClelland (1970). Nevertheless, Kotter (1977) argued that power rarely appeared as a topic in management literature and course descriptions, because of its negative connotations. Power implied manipulation, and was something to be distrusted.

Lawrence and Lee (1984) wrote that the word was unpopular because of its implication that individual liberty would be restricted; it would make people "do things they would not otherwise do". Pettigrew (1972) suggested that "power involves the ability of an actor to produce outcomes consonant with his perceived interests". This conveys some idea that those 'outcomes' may not be in the interests of others. In a similar vein, Yukl (1989: 27) wrote, "power is the capacity to influence unilaterally the attitudes and behaviour of people in the desired direction". McMurry (1973) advised managers who sought power to 'watch your back'.

Power may be legitimised by being exercised on behalf of a recognised authority (Weber, 1947). Kotter (1977) however, argued that "formal authority does not guarantee a certain amount of power; it is only a resource that managers can use to generate power in their relationships". Further, "people can have authority without power and power without authority", and "the management scrapheap is full of people who have failed to appreciate this fact" (Lawrence and Lee, 1984). The degree of authority likely to be associated with a given managerial function "is related to the extent to which its activities are perceived to be significant" in attaining organizational goals (Legge and Exley, 1975).

Power does not only arise from authority, or position power, but also from other sources, such as "personality, knowledge and expertise" (Shetty, 1978). Mechanic (1962) suggested that

expert power, "special skills and access to certain kinds of information", was "likely to be limited" in that experts could be replaced, although there were "tremendous potentialities for power by withholding information, providing incorrect information, and so on". Mechanic also noted that lower participants in organizations achieved control not by using the role structure of the organization, but rather by circumventing, sabotaging, and manipulating it. The key to their power was "dependence together with manipulation of the dependency relationship".

Relationships of dependence amongst managers were described as a source of power by Kotter (1977), who noted that while persuasion and the formal authority implied by a manager's position were "important means by which successful managers cope", even taken together, "they are not usually enough". Effective managers "create, increase, or maintain...power over others" by manipulating dependency relationships.

Kotter outlined four types of power established within managerial relationships of dependency: a sense of obligation achieved through favours, friendship, or 'deals' to secure future obligation; belief in a manager's expertise, being expert, having a 'track record', or 'professional reputation', being visible; identification with a manager, being idealised and identified with by others due to personal possibly 'charismatic' characteristics; and perceived dependence on a manager, feeding the beliefs of others regarding their

dependence by finding and acquiring resources, and by affecting others' perceptions of those resources. In arguing a case for power relationships based on dependence, Kotter was preceded by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), Emerson (1962), Mechanic (1962), and his four sources of power drew on ideas from French and Raven (1960).

"Multiple sources of power imply that almost anyone in an organization may possess influence" (Shetty, 1978). According to Yukl (1989), "influence is a word that everybody seems to understand intuitively". Bacharach and Lawler (1980) described influence as "the more elusive aspect of organizational power", in that "influence relationships do not always coincide with the authority structure; one may be independent of the other".

Boyatzis (1982) observed that, even in the use of unilateral power, managers demonstrated influence skills to obtain compliance. He also noted their use of "socialized power", in which managers used "forms of influence to build alliances, networks, coalitions or teams".

Bacharach and Lawler (1980) argued that it was important to distinguish between "two dimensions of power - authority and influence", authority being "stable, formal and normatively sanctioned", and influence being "fluid, informal and dynamic". They usefully quoted Bierstedt (1950), who suggested that,

"Power is inherently coercive and implies involuntary submission, whereas influence is persuasive and implies voluntary submission".

(Quoted Bacharach and Lawler, 1980: 12)

Thus, 'influence' has important connotations, not only for our consideration of power, but also for that of political behaviour as an element of managerial work.

Political Behaviour

According to Mayes and Allen (1977: 675), organizational politics,

"...is the management of influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization or to obtain sanctioned ends through non-sanctioned influence means".

While this description does not say that organizational politics involve dishonesty, it leaves the reader vaguely uneasy, and illustrates Kakabadse's (1983) view that it is simple to see "how politics come to be identified as negative".

Bacharach and Lawler (1980) considered that the "main void in organizational theory is a lack of concern with politics", and they suggested that organizations were politically negotiated orders, in which survival "is a political act". Kakabadse (1983) noted that "politics in organizations are ever present".

Bennett (1981: 182) noted the relative absence of discussions of politics in much of the literature, and management education programmes:

"...there seems to be a marked tendency to shy away from it. Perhaps this is because 'politics' has a dirty-word connotation to it. Perhaps it is because the major behavioural science concepts are rather 'pure', and that their application tends to demand an 'open' approach. Whatever the reason, its absence can only be seen as naive. The facts of organizational life in most enterprises are such that 'politicking' is bound to occur".

Stewart (1982) commented that it was "surprising that management writers have not paid more attention to politics in organizations", especially since social researchers working in them "rapidly discover examples of the political activity that exists if the subject of investigation is one that touches on current political interests".

Kakabadse (1983) suggested that politics in organizations have not been thoroughly researched because writers, researchers, and managers have not been able to agree on relevant basic principles concerning "the true meaning of the terms power, politics, and influence...coupled with the taboo nature of the subject".

Wilmott (1984) pointed to a conspicuous absence of "any systematic appreciation" of interpersonal and institutional politics in management theory and relevant empirical research, and noted that "references to power and politics tend to sit uneasily with the dominant ideology that supports managerial prerogative and identity". Wilmott criticized Mintzberg (1973), among others, for his lack of concern with the political nature of managerial work. Mintzberg did, however, recognise the requirement for "a whole host of 'political' skills associated with the conflict and infighting in large bureaucracies", although he did not enlarge on this until he began writing about organizations and power in the late 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps some partial explanation of Mintzberg's early reticence to address political aspects might be found in his statement (1985)

that, while he accepted the existence of organizational politics, he was "not personally enthusiastic about it".

Many of the above points indicate that influence is generally the more subtle and acceptable face of power, and the prime means by which managers negotiate and secure their ends . We shall next consider persuasion as one means of exercising influence.

Persuasion and other Influence Tactics

Simon (1953) argued that persuasion and suggestion were descriptions of "kinds of influence which do not necessarily involve any relationship of authority". Lawrence and Lee (1984) however, suggested that often, a manager who used persuasion was "backing it up, albeit not openly, with potential coercion or perceived legitimate or referent power".

In Kotter's (1977) view, managers used their power "to influence others directly, face to face, and in other more indirect ways". While persuasion was "very powerful and possibly the single most important method of influence", it had disadvantages: it was time-consuming, and required skill and information. Nevertheless, senior managers "persuade, negotiate and build alliances to smooth the path for the decisions they wish to make", and thus gained acceptance for their decisions by using politics (Mintzberg, 1985).

While persuasion has been shown to be a powerful influence tactic, it is not the only resource which managers may call upon

to exert influence. Two studies of influence tactics in superior, subordinate, and co-worker relationships were reported by Kipnis et al. (1980), the first of which identified 370 influence tactics, grouped into fourteen categories. These influence tactics were used as a basis for the second study, which found eight dimensions of influence - assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeals, blocking, and coalitions. With such a range of influence tactics available to managers, it is not difficult to see how they can negotiate in their environments by making the marginal adjustments in behaviour referred to by Sayles (1964). Yukl (1989) reviewed the influence tactics studies conducted by Kipnis et al. (1980), Mowday (1978), and Schilit and Locke (1982), and summarised their findings in terms of five main categories of influence; rational persuasion, exchange tactics, legitimate requests, pressure tactics and personal appeals, which corresponded approximately to French and Raven's (1960) five bases of power.

More Recent research on Managerial Work

This chapter has so far considered inter alia, traditional management theory, verbal communication, networks, contingency, power and influence, and political behaviour. We shall now look at recent research which embraced all of these matters in connection with the establishment of standards of management competence. The Standards Project of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) published a report in 1990 of research which was conducted through "consultation with thousands of managers

from many organizations of different management jobs in a variety of contexts" (Day, 1988). An IPM training briefing (IPM, 1990a) reported that the consultation process had involved "around 3000 people in the public and private sectors... professional institutions and academic bodies and ...the other 150 lead bodies currently setting competence standards to apply across all sectors of industry".

The resultant MCI (1990) report of managerial tasks, behaviour and personal skills claimed to have been derived from the best practice found in British management (IPM, 1990a). It would appear from the MCI report that the divide between traditional management theory and the attributes of managerial work revealed by empirical research, and so apparent in the literature, was an illusory one in practice. The managers in the MCI study were engaged in an integrated process of both 'POSDCORB'-type work, and the interpersonal behaviour which facilitated that work. The MCI standards report presented a sharply-focussed and detailed picture of managerial work which considered the 'reality' of that work in its entirety. It showed that managers pursued the tasks required for the fulfilment of organizational goals through a combination of effective interpersonal relationships, knowledge and experience.

The relevance of the Management Charter Initiative to management development will be considered in Chapter Three.

Conclusion

According to Anthony (1977: 294), much of managerial work was

"tedious, demanding in time and attention without being stimulating to the intelligence". The writings on managerial work which appear in this review were not selected with the express intention of disputing Anthony's view. Yet in concert, they appear to do so. In their entirety, they present managerial work as highly interactive, responding, varied, adaptive and manipulative. They also convey a sense of the challenge inherent in coping with uncertainty arising from changing organizational environments and relationships. They present the possibility that managerial work may be exciting and rewarding to its participants, when they cope successfully with uncertainty, variety, and a wide range of choices in their work.

CHAPTER TWO : PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The growth of personnel management in Britain has been recounted by Niven (1967) and Watson (1977), and in America by Eilbert (1959). There is a very extensive English-language literature available on all aspects of personnel management, some of which deal with specific sectors of employment such as the Civil Service (Armstrong, 1971), local government (Fowler, 1975), the National Health Service (Cuming, 1978), and hotels and catering (Boella, 1983).

This brief review is necessarily selective, and it emphasises themes which are of particular relevance to the research. Nevertheless, these themes do largely reflect major issues in the study of personnel management.

Defining Personnel Management

For Miller and Coghill (1964), personnel management was "an important social institution"; any study of the occupation should treat personnel activities "as phenomena to be explained rather than merely described". Henstridge (1975) also referred to personnel work as a "phenomenon", that is, why it existed, and why it took a variety of forms in different organizations.

Tyson (1987) proposed that if personnel was defined as the management of the employment relationship, then personnel specialists were "working at the heart of issues which are of considerable significance to our society". Further, he suggested that personnel activity may be viewed as,

"...a part of those techniques designed to make the world of work seem predictable, rational and comprehensible, and therefore to make management possible" (p.524).

Watson (1986: 172) described personnel management as an activity which "derives from and contributes to the employment strategy of the organization", and suggested that,

"it is to be understood as that component of the management of an organization which specialises in dealing with the problems which emerge from the fact that organizations employ human beings".

Watson, however, also supplied an "invented 'alternative' definition", which he described as "loaded". In this, personnel managers obtained, exploited, and dispensed with labour as required to meet organizational objectives. Any concern with "human welfare, justice or satisfactions" was merely instrumental, to enable "controlling interests to be met and, then, always at least cost". Watson wrote that this suggestion was "no less realistic a characterisation of what goes on", than other more traditional definitions which emphasised the "caring" aspects of personnel management.

Miner and Miner (1976) defined personnel management in terms of its goals, which were "the same as the goals of management in general". Legge (1989: 22) however, gave a rather more comprehensive description of the personnel occupation:

"It would appear that personnel management is about selecting, developing, rewarding, and directing employees in such a way that not only will they achieve satisfaction and 'give of their best' at work, but by so doing enable the employing organization to achieve its goals. Furthermore, personnel management is the task of all managers, not just of personnel specialists alone".

The Incidence of Personnel Specialists

While all organizations clearly employ human resources, research has shown that not all of them employ personnel specialists (Crichton and Collins, 1966; Thomason, 1981; Batstone, 1980; Daniel and Millward, 1983).

Crichton and Collins (1966) received 254 replies to their study of personnel specialists in South Wales, and noted that 101 organizations had no personnel specialist, and that 70% of these employed fewer than 500 people. Thomason (1981) suggested that "the most common guesstimate employed" in ascertaining the incidence of personnel specialists was that "most enterprises of above 200 or 250 employees" would have them.

Batstone (1980) reported an Industrial Relations Research Unit study conducted in 1977/8 which used a stratified sample of 1,000 manufacturing establishments employing fifty or more people. It was found that "only a fifth" of those employing 50 to 99 people had a personnel specialist at the level of the plant, while over 90% of those with more than 500 employees "had such specialists". Overall, 46% of establishments had "at least one manager whose sole responsibilities" were personnel and/or industrial relations.

In their study of workplace industrial relations, Daniel and Millward (1983) examined "personnel management in its organizational context", and their "first substantive finding" was that "personnel work is chiefly carried out by people who are not formally employed as personnel specialists". Indeed, they

"were struck by the rarity of personnel managers". In workplaces that employed fewer than 500 people, they found that a tendency for personnel work to be carried out by general managers and administrators was especially marked.

Daniel and Millward suggested that, due to the tendency for smaller workplaces to be excluded in previous research, "the number of workplaces which do not have personnel specialists has tended to be substantially understated". They also reported that the relationship between the numbers of people employed on site, and the presence of a personnel specialist was "very strong and consistent", and they therefore placed particular emphasis on establishment size, rather than "the size of the total organization of which they were a part".

Both Batstone (1980) and Daniel and Millward (1983) observed that there was a relationship between the existence of personnel specialists, and trade union activity. Batstone (1980) suggested that, with the growth of increasingly formal arrangements in industrial relations, and managements' responses to the presence of unions, "union organization and personnel managers tend to encourage the growth of each other". Daniel and Millward (1983) found "a strong association" between their measures of specialisation in personnel management and their measures of trade union organization and activity.

Personnel as a Specialist Occupation

Obviously, where an organization does not employ a personnel specialist, at least some personnel duties have to be undertaken

by other members of management. When this observation is coupled with the idea that 'personnel' is an element in every manager's job, "it is possible to argue about whether or not personnel is a specialist function" (Lawrence, 1986).

Legge and Exley (1975) wrote that the status of personnel specialists was undermined by other management functions' involvement in personnel work, which suggested that it "does not appear to be a truly specialist activity involving unique knowledge and skills". If "all managers in a sense are personnel managers" (Legge, 1977), and "all members of management are involved...in a general way" (Watson, 1977), the question then arises of whether personnel practitioners may properly be called 'specialists', when they do not have exclusive responsibility for personnel work.

According to Pigors and Myers (1969), personnel administration was "a line management responsibility and a staff function". In their Statement on Personnel Management and Personnel Policies, the Institute of Personnel Management (1963) recognised that,

"Personnel management is a responsibility of all those who manage people as well as being a description of the work of those who are employed as specialists. It is that part of management which is concerned with people at work and with their relationships within an enterprise".

Crichton (1968) regarded personnel specialists as "seekers after consistency through the establishment of policies and procedures - bureaucrats anxious to set down 'the rules'", and she described the association between functional specialism in personnel management and the development of bureaucratic

organizations. For Barber (1970), personnel's specialised activity lay in organising and developing employees to attain the highest efficiency, adaptability and profitability; these contributions from personnel would "justify" its existence.

Batstone (1980) saw the growth of the personnel function since the early 1960s as a move towards the recommendations on industrial relations reform made by the Donovan Commission (1968), and equally, as "part of a general trend towards managerial specialisation and 'professionalisation'". He attributed "this increasing division of labour within management" to two factors: the changing structure of British industry, especially the growth of multi-plant companies; and "the trend towards a more self-conscious and detailed organization of management".

Nevertheless, the growth of personnel took place in a piecemeal way, with no integration between its constituent specialisms (Timperley, 1973).

Writing about the aspects of personnel management that were best undertaken by specialists, Legge (1977) suggested grouping activities according to "the substantive expertise...and the relevant processual skills required". Thus, the final format or design of a specialist personnel department would take account of the three major factors of the dominant culture of the organization; the factors which determine the organizational context; and "the extent to which both suggest the organization is more or less differentiated".

Bottomley (1983) outlined a somewhat narrower view of personnel

specialist functions, as being "a repository of knowledge as to the rules; and adviser or trainer of line management in the application of these rules; and a monitor of their application". He did, however add that personnel management must enable organizations to adapt to change, by spearheading new strategies in human resource management.

Personnel specialists exist as an identifiable occupational group, although their roles may differ between organizations (Farnham, 1984). Nevertheless, if we fully assimilate the idea that personnel management is both an occupational specialism and an element in all managerial jobs, it is possible to say that while the 'concept' of a specialism exists, it can gain presence in organizations only when allowed to do so by employers:

"It took two World Wars, a great deal of labour law and the challenge of a strong labour movement to persuade many boards of directors that they had to have a specialised personnel department".

(Thurley, 1981: 26).

Further, top managers would have "whatever kind of personnel function they think their business needs", thus leaving personnel managers with "little control over their own destiny" (Syrett, 1987).

Contingency

Glueck (1974) wrote that the goals of personnel necessarily involved those of the whole organization. Personnel managers' contributions to organizational objectives could earn them respect from other managers (Myers, 1971). Anthony (1977) suggested that "self-respecting personnel managers...identify

themselves squarely with other managers in their devoted pursuit of efficiency, profit and survival".

Legge (1978) argued that personnel could not generate resources for its work unless it could demonstrate its contribution to organizational success, and she described a "vicious circle" in which the potential contribution could not be achieved without resources. A partial explanation of personnel managers' vulnerability derived from the difficulty "in defining and demonstrating effective performance in personnel roles" (Guest and Horwood, 1981).

One way out of the "vicious circle" was proposed by Legge (1978) in which personnel managers could adopt "a contingency approach both to substantive issues of personnel management, and to the design and operating style of its institutional presence". Guest and Horwood (1980) however, argued that in advocating a contingency approach, Legge failed "to make explicit the possibility that in practice there is a realistic choice of feasible paths", and that she "actually ignores the full range of choices that are often available".

Henstridge (1975) saw the personnel task as being "not only complex, but continuous and contingent". Personnel managers were forced into contingent behaviour, to the extent that they 'tinkered' with systems to make them operable. A contingency approach to problem-solving brought with it both flexibility and "a sensitivity to the political dimensions of organizational life" (Legge, 1978).

The contingent nature of personnel work is implicit in Tyson and Fell's (1986) comment that "there are a number of different ways in which personnel work is conducted, and...we cannot generalize sensibly about 'personnel management' outside the organizational context". It is evident also in Fowler's (1983) suggestion that personnel initiatives should be relevant to "the current developing operational or business needs of the organization", and in Brewster and Richbell's (1982) reminder that personnel specialists should be "conscious of what is feasible within their organization and try less hard to reach some professional personnel ideal".

Professionalisation

We shall now consider the terms 'profession', 'professional', 'professionalism', and 'professionalisation'; first in a general context, and then in relation to personnel management.

The occupations of medicine and law were "surrounded by mystique and social prestige" (Watson, 1977). Further, they were "uncontroversially seen as being professions" (Preece and Nicol, 1980). They have provided a traditional model of what professions are, and of how their members are expected to behave.

The criteria intrinsic to professions, their 'traits' or 'attributes' (cf. inter alia , Carr Saunders and Wilson, 1933; Cogan, 1953; Yoder, 1956; Greenwood, 1957; Millerson, 1964), have served to provide a model against which occupations aspiring to 'professional' status might be evaluated. Success

might be determined by the extent to which such traits or attributes have been acquired, and the occupations thus receive "a place in the league table of success" (Watson, 1977).

The 'trait approach' has attracted criticism on the grounds that problems exist in defining 'professions' (Sheldrake, 1971; Pettigrew, 1973); that the approach precludes the questions of control (Johnson, 1972), and power (Preece and Nicol, 1980); and that it "produced one of the most blatant cases of the confusion of the topic and the resource in sociology" (Watson, 1977). These points are explained below.

Sheldrake (1971) conducted a brief but useful review of definitions of 'profession', and concluded that there was a "lack of clarity" which resulted from the way in which the concept of 'profession' had been 'lifted' out of conventional usage, "its analytical value being confused by the acceptance of 'asserted' features of professions". He outlined the difficulty of deciding "what are professions (unless one adopts the strategy of calling a profession a profession because 'it calls itself one')".

Pettigrew (1973) similarly noted the lack of agreement in the criteria of 'profession' and argued that one of the analytical problems of studying specialist higher occupational groups had been "the attempt to impose the ideal-type construct of profession in an empirical area which has required a more sophisticated analytical model". Pettigrew proposed that, in treating a profession as "a variable rather than an ideal type",

the question to be raised was not whether a particular group "is or is not a profession", but rather whether it is "more or less" a profession. He suggested, however, that this latter approach was also not without its problems of definition, due to the lack of agreement on the criteria to be used in the evaluation of 'more or less'.

Johnson (1972) described the definitional exercises which "litter the field" as "largely sterile", and preferred to look at professionalism as a means of controlling an occupation. He proposed that if the perspective of control was taken, professionalism "becomes redefined", and that a profession "is not then, an occupation, but a means of controlling an occupation".

An alternative approach to the trait one was advanced by Preece and Nicol (1980) in their 'power model', which had as its central concern the location of the question of professionalism "within the much broader interest in power relationships within the wider society".

A certain amount of confusion arising from the definition of 'profession' is apparent from the foregoing sources. Legge's (1978) explanation, that the confusion resulted from "our everyday use of the term 'professional', which means no more than an individual with almost any kind of expertise", may seem too simple. It does, however, alert the reader to the problems inherent in the use of language when interpreting the literature on professions, as these can serve as pitfalls for the unwary.

Watson (1977) noted "many shades of meaning": "being professional means, we might say, what the speaker wants it to mean".

In turning to the subject of professionalism in personnel management, it is not the intention here to answer long-standing questions, such as whether personnel is, or is not a profession, or that of whether it ought to be (Miller, 1959). Wilensky (1964) regarded the "service ethic" as "pivotal" in considering whether an occupation was a profession, or not. The existence of "a specialised body of knowledge which requires intensive, prolonged training" was thought by Miller (1959) to comprise a basis for professional status. Winsbury (1968) refuted personnel's claim to professional status by stating that it did not have controlled entry. The arguments for and against the professional status of personnel work, based on the trait approach, have gone to and fro, to little effect.

The trait approach, however, has been largely abandoned in the literature during the past two decades, in favour of a more 'processual' one, which accommodates the idea that occupations change with time.

Earlier, it was suggested that personnel specialists comprise a widely-recognised occupational group. Its participation in the process of 'professionalisation' is discussed below, followed by further exploration of the terms professionalism and professional in relation to personnel management.

Friedson (1973: 22) argued that professionalisation could

"be defined as a process by which an organized occupation, usually but not always by virtue of making a claim to special esoteric competence and to concern for the quality of its work and its benefits to society, obtains the exclusive right to perform a particular kind of work, control, training for and access to it, and control the right of determining and evaluating the way the work is performed".

He also suggested that professional ideologies were

"intrinsically imperialistic". Watson (1977) wrote that occupational autonomy, "the key to power", was the ultimate goal of such a process. Thus, he pursued a "'power conscious' theoretical scheme" in his own research. Chapter 6 of Watson's book contained a literature review as a preface to his research report. In his review, Watson traced the history of professionalisation and discussed the notions of 'professions', 'professionalism', and 'professionalisation'.

One of Watson's main arguments was that professionalisation was an occupational strategy. Tyson and Fell (1986: 55) however, expressed a contrary view:

"There is no real evidence of a strategy as a whole. Proof of such a strategy would have to show that across all the different companies and industries personnel specialists were acting in concert to fulfil some sort of chosen destiny to which they all subscribed".

Earlier, McFarland (1962) had recognised "the imperfect nature of the kind of professionalisation possible within the corporate enterprise", when he outlined his concept of 'professional orientation', which he noted as "quite different from the classical concepts of professionalisation". In this, McFarland focussed more on the individual personnel practitioner than on

the occupational group. Professional orientation was delineated as: building a career around the occupation; the intention to stay in the occupation indefinitely; having interest in the personnel field external to his own company; and a "comprehensive and sophisticated knowledge of the field".

Implicit in McFarland's analysis is the possibility that personnel practitioners who exhibit 'professional orientation' are to some degree what Gouldner (1957) called 'cosmopolitans', who look to an external reference body or group, rather than 'locals' who take their values and ideas from the organization.

Ritzer and Trice (1969) pointed to the usefulness of looking at professionalism on two levels, both the occupational and the individual. They argued that this dual perspective could facilitate the examination of how far the personnel occupation had evolved towards the status of a profession. Further, it could provide a means to explore the idea that "in every occupation, individuals vary in their degree of professionalism".

Honey (1976) appears to have recognised that varying degrees of professionalism could exist in personnel, and he wrote that successful 'professional' personnel managers were ones who engaged in activities which were competent, credible and contingent. Personnel 'professionals' who were "narrow specialists", preoccupied with justifying their activities, precluded themselves from organizational advancement (Petrie, 1965).

Armstrong (1986) suggested that personnel specialists have advanced their profession "by establishing a monopoly of competence". He did, however, concede Thomason's (1980) view, that a monopoly could not be claimed as the occupation's skills were not sufficiently exclusive and distinct. Indeed, the IPM itself had never claimed exclusivity in this regard, having long recognised that personnel management "forms part of every manager's job" (IPM, 1974).

The history of the development of the IPM (Niven, 1967; Watson, 1977) traced its growth as a regulatory body over those members of the personnel occupation who voluntarily associated with it. Coke (1983) suggested that bodies such as the IPM represented "twentieth-century guildism", which had the purpose of setting "ethical standards for member organizations, to raise the technical competence of individual members by means of educational programmes, and to test that competence by examination". The fact remains, however, that while the IPM regulates the membership of its own ranks, it does not regulate the occupation generally. At best, therefore, it can hope to establish only standards of professionalism to which practitioners may or may not subscribe.

This may not, however, be an unhealthy state of affairs. According to Tyson and Fell (1986), the "reality of professionalism should...be in the ethic not in its institutionalisation". Their 'professional ethic' required "expertise, and a concentration of the skills and knowledge

which are needed to achieve work tasks". This emphasis on the achievement of tasks is an important one, for there has been some suggestion that professionalism acts to the detriment of tasks. Glover (1978) wrote that the existence of professions "has often interfered with the freedom of individuals to develop skills which are directly related to the needs of tasks, as opposed to the needs defined by occupational interests".

The pursuit of professional status by members of the personnel occupation has attracted a number of other criticisms from social scientists and management writers. Anthony (1977) suggested that personnel managers had withdrawn from their "genuinely professional" welfare roots, and had pursued professionalism "almost entirely in order to enhance their status in the eyes of other managers". This argument has some similarity to Lansbury's (1974) view that professionalisation signifies "a desire for prestige".

Guest and Horwood (1981) expressed doubt about the value of developing the "personnel professional", as a generally applicable role-model, in view of the diversity both of specialists' backgrounds and of the range of personnel roles in practice. The professional model was rejected in the report of their research which showed that, although education and experience were "*desirable*", the personnel managers in their study felt that the essential minimum characteristics needed for effective performance were appropriate social skills and personality; "it is who you are and where you have been rather

than 'academic' personnel management knowledge and skills".

Lawrence (1986) argued that personnel managers saw the techniques and procedures which they used in their work "not only as tools for doing the job but the accoutrements of professional status per se". A further sort of instrumentalism was noted by Watson (1986), in that personnel managers "are professionals when it suits them, and part of the organization when it does not".

The instrumental nature of professionalism is apparent when we identify some 'key words' connected with it. When we see that it concerns control, power, autonomy, credibility, contingency, competence and expertise, it is possible to surmise that it might be a mistake to apply Kanter's (1979) [American] view of professionalism, "as a retreat for the powerless" to the professionalisation process of the personnel occupation in the UK. Chapter One of this report has already argued that these 'key words' hold political implications. They are often used in politically loaded ways, and thus can enhance our understanding of professionalisation as a political activity. These issues are addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Ambiguity

Several elements of ambiguity are clearly present in the idea that personnel specialists work as members of management teams. Various other facets of ambiguity have been identified in the personnel literature, and in writings on more general aspects of management.

There were legal and moral difficulties in justifying absolute managerial authority over employees (Sayles, 1964). Management was "not a neutral function" in which managers could be impartial (Farnham, 1984). The management of resources imposed "conflicting criteria" on managers, which created ambiguity or ambivalence which was "fundamental to most aspects of the managerial occupation" (Watson, 1977). The conflict of interest between capital and labour contained a "structural contradiction between the material interests of employer and employee", and managers themselves should not be "taken in or confused by technicist ideology that disregards [this] conflict of interest" (Willmott, 1984). While managers are agents of the employers, they are also employees.

Another kind of ambiguity was discussed by Machin and Stewart (1981). They noted how, at every level of management apart from the very lowest and the highest levels, managers were simultaneously expected to be "leaders, colleagues, and followers". Thus their membership of a management team could contain many elements of ambiguity. While all of the team members pursued organizational goals, specialist groups were "likely to be mindful of the differential impacts of alternative organizational strategies upon their own sectional interests" (Willmott, 1984). "Something of a philosophical and psychological quagmire" could result when a member of a management team went against the team's group norms on issues of substance (Morse, 1976).

Watson (1977) argued that conflict, tension, ambiguity and ambivalence characterised personnel work, and that these problems were rarely temporary ones. Rather, they seemed to be "intrinsic and essential" to personnel's central involvement "with the utilisation of human resources within a capitalistic industrial society" (Watson, 1977). Thus, Miner and Miner (1976) suggested that personnel managers had "been caught at the nexus of conflict" between the two orientations of traditional management, and professional personnel management. Personnel managers "walk a tightrope" because they work "at the nexus of competing values" (Tyson and Fell, 1986).

It was likely that personnel specialists would "always have greater ambivalence about accepting management's values in toto" because they were influenced by various reference groups (Crichton, 1968). They are not alone, however, in being influenced by external reference groups. Many aspects of organizational life were defined by organizational members on the basis of information from the social environment (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978).

Legge and Exley (1975) argued that a "basic" ambiguity in personnel as a management function arose from "contradictory assessments": while some commentators regarded personnel as a vital and valuable resource for optimising use of people and their skills to attain organizational goals, others regarded it as lacking in power, status, confidence and purpose. This ambiguity "pervades the function and roles it gives rise to",

and results in "confusion".

The aim of personnel management is the achievement of "both efficiency and justice, neither of which can be pursued successfully without the other" (IPM, 1963). This dual aim must clearly present problems for the practitioner. Watson (1986) noted that personnel specialists had to "look two ways at once in their work". They were under pressure to emphasise care for employees, partly in order to make managerial authority more acceptable to the managed, and they also had to persuade other managers that personnel was an important contributor to the effective control of employees.

Watson argued that there were six other types of ambiguity in personnel management. First, it existed in the nature of authority exercised by personnel managers: they were designated advisers, yet they gave "orders disguised as advice". Second, it lay in the expertise component of their authority: if they stressed their expertise to other managers, personnel decisions would be pushed to the personnel department, and if they did not claim expertise, other managers would ignore them. Third, the effectiveness of personnel departments was not easily measured; even if no problems arose from a successful department, it might be little noticed and excluded from decision-making, with the effect of being able to act less successfully in the future avoidance of personnel problems. Fourth, ambiguity surrounded the wants, expectations and orientations of employees, about which the information gathered

by personnel managers was frequently unclear, inadequate, ambiguous, and often 'coloured' by their information channels. Fifth, personnel procedures, systems and techniques, designed to regulate and rationalise the employment relationship, could lead to disorder or uncertainty in their interpretation and/or their implementation. Sixth, and finally, there was the paradox that the human element itself gave rise to 'true' ambivalence, namely the simultaneous harbouring of like and dislike.

Earlier, Watson (1977) had argued that personnel managers also experienced ambiguity between the advisory nature of their role, and being forced towards interventionist action.

Tyson (1980) suggested three ways in which ambiguity is inherent in the personnel role, "depending on how we approach the question". The professional role model could give rise to ambiguity, first through the expectations of other managers if they believed that personnel was an "intercessory" role, and second because of the confusion which surrounded the question of whether or not personnel management was a profession. Ambiguity could also result from personnel's use of the control and coordination devices of policies and procedures, as impersonal policies and procedures, impersonally administered, could result in personnel managers being the "victim of their own, impersonal rules". A similar view was expressed by Watson (1986), who suggested that all personnel procedures "contain the seeds of their own destruction".

Tyson's (1980) third aspect of ambiguity concerned the role of

personnel managers as negotiators of meaning. This was immediately concerned with the daily performance of personnel management. The imprecision and vagueness inherent in human relationships and in much communication could create ambiguity which personnel specialists might use to advantage. Thus, for Tyson, ambiguity should be viewed "as an opportunity and a sign of humanity" rather than as a "threat, and a source of anxiety": personnel specialists could use "interpersonal skills of a high order" to renegotiate and reinterpret meanings to the advantage of their organizations and of the different interest groups within them.

The "management of meaning" contributed to management as a political activity (Gowler and Legge, 1983). It is clear from the writings on managerial work, influence, and political behaviour reviewed in Chapter One, that the 'management of meaning' is an integral feature of much management-level work.

The literature reviewed here has described various aspects of ambiguity found in all managerial jobs. The writings which specifically concern ambiguity in personnel management suggest that personnel work, because of its very nature, contains more pronounced elements of ambiguity than are experienced in other managerial jobs. Indeed, personnel managers were described as "specialists in ambiguity" by Tyson (1983), who felt that this feature of their role could limit their development of "a capacity to contribute to managerial strategic thinking".

Role

The notion of role has appeared several times in the above discussion of ambiguity without any explanation or detailed analysis of the term's relevance or meaning. This was deliberate, as the matter of role in personnel management is one which has generated debate of its own, and its inclusion within a review of the idea of ambiguity would have detracted from its own importance.

The concept of role clearly links social structure and social process, yet it has not always been clear from role theory whether role is "a real entity, a theoretical construct, or both" (Mechanic, 1962).

Batstone (1980) regarded it as "particularly sad", and "indicative of an implicit recognition of failure", that discussions of the role of personnel managers focussed on "their personal problems of knowing what exactly they should be doing and the problems of convincing other managers to accept their conclusions". Henstridge (1975) suggested that problems of role in personnel management originated primarily in "the lack of clear comprehension" of personnel's function and purpose. Role descriptions which were over-simplified could lead to "erroneous impressions" of what personnel managers are, and what they do (French and Henning, 1966).

According to Henstridge (1975), the role of personnel was determined by a "complex web" of factors relating to people and relationships, organizations, technology, politics, and so on.

Fluctuation in the state of these factors meant that its role was not consistent. To some extent, the role of personnel was determined by the place of personnel managers in organizational power structures. The finding of acceptable working solutions was one of the most important features of the personnel role, which emphasised its "innovative ability", and "representational aspects".

Hofstede (1973) suggested that the role of personnel varied from organization to organization, and that there was less consensus between organizations on that of personnel than on that of production, or marketing. Lack of clarity about personnel's role could affect both its status and image in a given organization.

Foulkes (1975) proposed that personnel directors should assume "a proactive stance", take an "initiating role", and that the function ought to be "strategic and assertive". According to Legge (1978) the key role of personnel departments was that of turning personnel theory into fact, and of demonstrating how, and to what extent 'good' personnel management could and did contribute to organizational success. Both of these views seem somewhat at odds with the idea that personnel "should essentially be an advisory role" (Prior, 1981). Lawrence (1971) however, argued that personnel managers had been robbed of a vital proactive role by the improved effectiveness of line managers in personnel matters, which had "pushed" personnel specialists into an advisory one.

The notion of the advisory role in personnel work has generated a minor debate, which has suggested that the term 'advisory', with its connotations of passivity, may be at least partly inappropriate for describing the behaviour of personnel managers when they advise other managers. Crichton (1963) felt that 'advisory' was sometimes used to conceal the controlling nature of personnel management, "the iron hand in a velvet glove". In a study of the authority, influence, and status of corporate personnel directors in twenty-five firms, French and Henning (1966) found that in none was the role essentially advisory.

According to Ritzer and Trice (1969), it was an "occupational myth" that personnel managers were "passive non-decision makers" and compromisers. The myth had enabled the maintenance of precarious relationships, however, as the power of personnel managers could be maintained, while allowing "significant others to believe they have made the decisions". Thus, the mythical occupational image of the advisory role had perpetuated the view that personnel managers did not make decisions for line managers, or manipulate their decisions. The reality was that they did (Ritzer and Trice, 1970). Watson (1977) argued that "it seems to be something of a rhetorical device to call what are in effect executive commands 'advice'".

In a similar vein, Fowler (1983) wrote that while an advisory role could be interpreted as 'passive', one characteristic of effective personnel departments was that they saw this role "in positive, proactive terms", and rather than being merely

reactive, they took the initiative in providing information and in forestalling potential crises. Manning (1983) took this sort of thinking a little further by arguing that the traditional notion of personnel's advisory role had to be disputed before personnel could develop, and "rise to the challenge" of a turbulent future.

Gribben (1987) wrote about turbulence in personnel management in the late 1980s in the form of a "sea change" from a period of mainly reactive "industrial fire-fighting" and reorganization towards one of more proactive human resource management. He went on to suggest that this "changing agenda means that the conventional image of the personnel manager as an Aunt Sally between top management and unions is even more irrelevant".

Both Fox (1966a) and Dryburgh (1972) described the problems and dilemmas which could arise from 'man in the middle' roles. Crichton (1963) had earlier pointed to the problem that the image of personnel managers as 'liaison officers', 'go-betweens', 'buffers' or 'links', indicated "a middle ground, communicating and interpreting role", which meant that it was "seldom [that] their identification with the management team [was] made clear".

The notion of providing a service to line managers promotes another view of personnel's role which, in common with the advisory and intercessory roles, does not immediately inspire connotations of personnel managers being dynamic and proactive. According to Foulkes and Morgan (1977), service to line

management was "the 'bread and butter' of the personnel job".

McFarland's (1962) view of the service role was that it helped personnel managers to feel successful, because they were asked for advice. It also helped to "de-emphasise" their control and audit responsibilities, which otherwise would have been seen as controlling or limiting the behaviour of others. McFarland felt that a strong service orientation was "not congruent with concepts of vigor and aggressiveness in pursuing a dynamic, forward-moving personnel program".

There has been some idea that providing a service can be politically useful to personnel managers. Gross (1964) felt that personnel departments should provide a "visible service", and thus prove their usefulness. A similar idea was promoted by Honey (1976); departments should be "seen to do things well". According to Humble (1988), "an obsession" with service could help personnel managers to "get all the power and influence [that] they deserve".

An element of instrumentality is also evident in the idea that personnel specialists could adapt, modify or change roles to suit the prevailing economic or organizational climate (cf. Thomason, 1985).

It is not intended here to review all of the writings in connection with roles in personnel work. Instead, three different approaches have been selected to illustrate that, with the development of the personnel occupation through time, the

way in which 'role' has been conceived by writers has also changed.

Anthony and Crichton (1969) outlined five roles of personnel specialists; consultancy, diagnostic attention to policy, maintenance of policies, operation of routine procedures, and clerical support. These, however, seem to be more tasks than roles. While tasks are component parts of roles, they are not the whole. Role is both what is done (tasks) and how it is done, which takes in considerations of power, status, and influence. Thus, Anthony and Crichton presented only part of the picture. The writings which follow, however, addressed the matter of role in a much broader way.

Guest and Horwood (1980) identified five possible personnel roles: welfare, third party, management control, professional, and residual. They suggested that the primary concern of the dominant perspective on personnel roles was, "what personnel managers should do". This focussed "on the nature of the goals to pursue and the activities to cover", but said "nothing about how to achieve goals". We have some indication here that prescription may be inappropriate, and that there is some link between the achievement of goals, and the personnel role(s) adopted by departments/specialists.

An even broader perspective was taken by Tyson and Fell (1986), who envisaged that there were four major roles for personnel specialists: representing their organizations' central value systems, maintaining the boundaries of their organizations,

providing stability and continuity, and adapting their organizations to change. This view uses a 'broad brush' on a wide canvas, yet it seems to tell us more about personnel roles than the narrow, task-centred outline sketched by Anthony and Crichton (1969).

Some recent research (Mackay and Torrington, 1986; Mackay, 1987a) has indicated that personnel specialists may be losing their right to paint on their own canvas, due to an apparently increasing use of consultants combined with devolution of responsibility for personnel work to line managers. Thus, the personnel role had been 'Balkanized', in that,

"The territory which could once have been delineated as personnel country, is being invaded, sold-off, subdivided and put under lease to consultants, sub-specialists and line managers, whose cross-cutting alliances do not correspond to a coherent, separate function".

(Tyson, 1987: 530)

This may, however, be the 'way of the world' for contemporary and future personnel managers, if we are to believe Hunt's (1987) view that they are like parents, whose objective "is not to make children depend upon us but to help them to achieve their aims, eventually without us". "The sole object of the personnel department should be to eliminate itself" (respondent quoted in Mackay, 1987b).

This section has shown that there has been a lack of coherence in writings about the role(s) of personnel management. Their diversity has, however, some explanatory value, in that they show 'role' to be not one, but many things, on which there

appears to have been little consensus of opinion. One thing that does emerge, is the realisation that role is important for its relevance to such aspects of personnel work as its effectiveness, status, image, power and influence.

Power and Influence in Personnel Management

The question of power and influence in managerial work was addressed in Chapter One. We shall now consider power and influence in personnel management, contextualised by the foregoing major themes relevant to the occupation.

The perceived effectiveness of a managerial function was related to the degree of authority it possessed (Legge and Exley, 1975). French and Henning (1966) suggested that some aspects of personnel management had "little or no authority", while others had "a high degree of unilateral authority". Further, personnel managers tended to think they had more authority than they were seen to have by their superiors or peers. Child and Ellis (1973) however, reported that their study's senior personnel managers "tended to have low scores on perceived authority and on the two measures of influence", both self-attributed and attributed by others.

Personnel managers lacked status, power and independence because they had little or no authority (cf. Jenkins, 1973; Winkler, 1974). Lack of authority was also discussed by Poole (1973), who found that the personnel departments in the two Sheffield factories he studied were rarely consulted about industrial relations problems.

Personnel managers could gain authority from the parts of their work which monitored/ ensured compliance with personnel procedures and government legislation, for those could provide them with opportunities to use unilateral power (Boyatzis, 1982). The personnel managers in Boyatzis' study used more unilateral power than did their counterparts in manufacturing or marketing. The majority of their duties, however, did not involve formal 'line' authority, so they used "socialised power", or influence tactics in their relationships with other managers. Boyatzis suggested that personnel managers' use of socialised power might arise from their role in their organizations, and their relative lack of both line authority and well-defined performance measures.

If personnel managers do not have much formal authority, they can use other ways of gaining power. Formal authority was no guarantee of power (Kotter, 1977). Even if there was no authority, considerable personal power could accrue from the location within an organization, and the manipulation of relationships (Mechanic, 1962). It could also derive from personality, knowledge and expertise (Shetty, 1978).

Ritzer and Trice (1969) argued that the personnel occupation had "only tenuous claims to exclusive expertise". Even so, expertise has been widely identified as a source of power (Mechanic, 1962; Pettigrew, 1972; Shetty, 1978). Lawrence and Lee (1984) argued that while it was common for formal authority over line managers to be absent, in practice personnel managers

had a number of very real sources of power. They could influence line managers by their expertise in handling disputes, and by their knowledge of company rules, procedures and government legislation.

Personnel managers could not, however, gain authority from their knowledge unless line management voluntarily came to them, and showed a willingness to follow their advice (Gross, 1964).

Legge (1978) argued that the success or failure of personnel policies often depended on line management. In a similar vein, Brewster and Richbell (1982) wrote that formally approved personnel policies might be ineffectual because line managers did not implement them.

Despite some dispute about the exclusivity of their expertise, personnel specialists do have the opportunity to act as 'gatekeepers'. Allen (1966) outlined the role of 'technological gatekeepers' in the transfer of technology between and among organizations. Pettigrew (1972) criticised Allen because he had presented the motivation for gatekeeping activities as altruistic, and did not explore the possibility that information control could be used as a source of power. The gatekeeper could use his position not only to increase his own power and status, but also to thwart the aspirations of others. The possession of information was a source of power and influence, and a way for managers to defend themselves and their positions (Westerlund and Sjostrand, 1979).

Power was enhanced by unsubstitutability and centrality (Watson,

1977). It could also be enhanced by skilful political behaviour within an organization (Mintzberg, 1985). It is suggested here that the ambiguities inherent in personnel management may also enhance rather than detract from power, in that a position at the crucial nexus of conflict has potential for exploitation as a power base, as have the opportunities for the negotiation of shared meanings. The research report explores these ideas, in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Human Resource Management

In the course of this chapter, the term 'human resource management' has appeared, solely in the context of 'managing people'. It has another connotation however, as 'HRM' which will be explained below. Storey (1989) suggested that HRM "has become very topical", yet, at the time this research was conceived and conducted, HRM was not a major concern in British personnel literature, and was not included as a research topic. For convenience in the research reports which follow, therefore, the convention has been adopted whereby 'human resource management' refers to 'managing people', and 'HRM' refers to the concept which will now be discussed.

According to Storey (1989), HRM achieved "a quite extraordinary significance", and was "one of the most controversial signifiers of managerial debate in the 1980s". Much of the debate concerned the nature of HRM in comparison to 'traditional' personnel management, which prompted Cowan (1988) to write, "we should not continue to waste time and effort in debating whether

we are engaged in human resource management or in personnel management". For Cowan, the debate was "effectively ended" by Armstrong (1987: 34), who wrote that,

"HRM is perceived as a total approach to the strategic management of a key resource which has to be the responsibility of the board, with advice from personnel specialists. Personnel management provides that advice and the services to implement the plans".

Tyson and Fell (1986) however, felt that HRM went "beyond the classical personnel management position and [had] as its starting point the integration and coordination of people planning with overall strategy formulation and corporate planning". In a paper which considered the major themes in existing literature on HRM, Hendry and Pettigrew (1976) felt that two themes emerged strongly; strategic HRM, and the idea or philosophy of the human resource as being valuable and an investment. For Hendry and Pettigrew, strategic HRM had four meanings: the use of planning; a coherent approach to the design and management of personnel systems based on an employment policy and manpower strategy, and often underpinned by a 'philosophy'; matching HRM activities and policies to some explicit business strategy; and seeing the people of the organization as a "strategic resource" for achieving competitive advantage.

Armstrong (1987) wrote that HRM was not "completely different" from personnel management, and that there was advantage in exploring their mutual roots to develop "a revised concept of HRM which links its worthwhile elements with the best

practices".

Further, HRM should be emphasised as a strategic approach which "linked closely with corporate strategy and must fit the culture of the organization". While some personnel managers might regard HRM as "old wine in new bottles", its main virtue was of treating people as "a key resource" whose management was a vital part of strategic planning.

In a similar vein, Guest (1989) felt that HRM could be merely a change of title for departments, "a short-term palliative", unless it was accompanied by "a new approach, with some substantive change behind the rhetoric". Such an approach would emphasise "*strategic* HRM", the fit and use of human resources in the organization, although this approach in itself did not "specify the specific goals" and was "still no different from what has always been advocated for personnel management in textbooks and elsewhere".

In response to Guest, Miller (1989) wrote that "there is nothing wrong with not having strategic HRM goals (as long as the business has some)", or with strategic HRM "looking like personnel management" even though the differences between them looked "confused and confusing". Moreover, "what turns management action into *strategic* management action is precisely the issue of 'fit'", and the key point was the link between strategy development and personnel management, which was "what HRM is all about". On the problem of 'fit', however, Guest (1989) had suggested that the bases for analysis still remained to

be defined.

For Price (1989), the distinctive feature of HRM was the degree to which it focussed on the connections between overall corporate strategy and personnel policies. According to Miller et al. (1989), strategic orientation was a distinguishing feature of the developing HRM model.

Storey (1989) felt that there was "elasticity" in the conceptual meaning of HRM, in that there appeared to be a 'hard' quantitative version which managed headcount as an economic resource, and a 'soft' one which derived from the human relations school of thought. The question was, not only how these could be integrated with each other, but also "with wider corporate strategy".

In contrast to 'old-style' personnel management, which was seen as relatively passive, HRM was "credited with a strongly proactive role designed to integrate employees into a harmonious and mutually supportive system of human relations" (Price, 1989). HRM was an emergent phenomenon which implied "something different from the proceduralized approach to handling labour", it represented "a set of managerial initiatives", and was about "*exploiting* the labour force more fully" (Storey, 1989).

In a critical analysis of HRM, Legge (1989) suggested that there were "clear similarities" between the normative models of personnel management and HRM: the importance of their

integration with organizational goals; their emphasis on line management's responsibility; their emphasis on employee motivation, fulfilment and development; and the importance of effective selection and development in accordance with organizations' needs. The differences between them Legge felt, were general, "rather of meaning and emphasis....than [of] substance". Personnel management was performed on subordinates by managers, while HRM focussed on what was done to managers. HRM denoted a proactive role for line managers in using resources to achieve results, and made them an integral part of the total resources for which they had responsibility. For Legge, a central feature of HRM was that senior managers actively managed their organizations' cultures. Thus, HRM was in theory, "a more central strategic management task than personnel management".

Guest (1989) argued that it was possible to view HRM as being distinctively different from conventional personnel management. While HRM policies were derived from conventional personnel management, they were selected to achieve HRM outcomes and goals, and achieved success through support from key leadership, strong culture, and a conscious desire to use human resources fully and effectively. The results were high levels of job performance, problem-solving, change, innovation, and cost-effectiveness together with low levels of turnover, absence, and grievances.

Guest offered "no more than the bones of a theory of HRM". He

felt however, that five conditions had to exist in organizations if HRM was to have "a chance of success": strong corporate leadership; strategic vision, with HRM a key component of corporate strategy; technological/production feasibility; employee/IR feasibility; and the ability to get HRM policies in place, for there was a risk that these might become espoused rather than operational.

For Guest, the question of feasibility in adopting HRM was an important one. His research on models of excellence in personnel management provided a range of different models; paternalist, welfare, production, professional, and human resource. This range gave "credence to the view that the HRM model is just one among a variety of forms of personnel management". Guest felt that for some companies, the HRM model might not be the most viable one, and it would not be sensible policy to pursue it.

Earlier in this chapter, we considered research which indicated that the personnel role was being 'Balkanized' due to apparent trends concerning the use of consultants and the increasing involvement of line managers in personnel tasks. There was some suggestion there that the erosion of personnel 'territory' seemed not only an inevitable consequence of those trends, but also one which personnel specialists themselves should be actively pursuing. Similar arguments have been found in relation to the HRM debate. Armstrong (1989) argued that as HRM involved all those who managed the business, it was "not

something which can be left to the specialists". In a stronger vein, Guest (1989) felt that if HRM was "to be taken seriously, personnel managers must give it away".

When the foregoing strands of argument are considered together with those concerning 'desirable' training for personnel specialists discussed in Chapter Three, it is possible to say that the future of personnel management as a distinct occupational specialism may not be assured. If these trends and ideas gain impetus, and the management of human resources devolves fully as an integral feature of all managers' jobs, then a question which may arise in the future is, "whither the personnel specialist?".

CHAPTER THREE : KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND USE

Introduction

"The concept of 'knowledge' is entirely meaningless in the absence of some mental acts in the mind of some knower".
(Ziman, 1978: 101)

The title of this chapter is a convenient abbreviation for its content, which concerns the nature and types of knowledge used in management in general, and in the personnel specialism in particular. Clearly managers must have knowledge of some sort to perform their jobs.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Seventh edition reprint 1983) defined knowledge as "...1. Knowing, familiarity gained by experience...2. person's range of information...3. theoretical or practical understanding...; the sum of what is known...; certain understanding, opp. to opinion...".

Barnes (1974: 9) however, suggested that it could readily be shown that most of our beliefs about the world "derive from theories rather than being entirely the product of experience. Theories are imposed upon reality rather than deriving from it".

Knowledge and Management

In management, 'good' theory derives from viewing existing ideas with "critical commonsense", and "constructive scepticism" (Watson, 1986). This notion implies the existence of some knowledge base which enables managers to be both critical and constructive in their deliberations. Thus the effective use of knowledge may result from "other competencies that involve

ways of thinking or reasoning" (Boyatzis, 1982).

There was, however, "a big gap between 'knowing' and 'doing'", and when managers were considered as professionals, there was a tendency to separate the knowledge aspects of management from the skills aspects because knowledge was easier to describe than skilled activity - "yet there always lurks in the background the fact that knowledge is but one small part of the job" (Sayles, 1964). Burgoyne and Stuart (1976) also mentioned a separation between professional knowledge in the technical sense, and the knowledge "which is developed by doing the job of management".

Boyatzis (1982) defined specialised knowledge as "a usable body of facts and concepts", which accommodated the notion that not all information is relevant to job performance. He suggested that management textbooks, training material and professional literature contained knowledge of "perceived relevance" to the manager, which managers felt they should know "because it is expected that they know it, not necessarily because it has any utility in functioning as a manager". Further, the possession of knowledge could refer to the ability to search for information when necessary. However, although specialised knowledge was important, it was "only one of the elements in enabling someone to be a competent manager".

Effectiveness in any managerial job would therefore appear to involve more than simply the possession and use of technical or other specialised knowledge. Thus our next focus of attention consists of the skills used in management, and the processes by

which these are learned.

Managerial Skills

Lethbridge (1975) surveyed 56 senior and 54 middle managers regarding their perceptions of the skills required in management. His respondents emphasised leadership, decision-making in situations of ambiguity, and peer skills, which led Lethbridge to suggest that training in these skills was more important than being taught traditional management theory, or technical skills. The respondents in Lau and Pavett's (1980) study ranked the importance of the skills and knowledge required in managerial jobs in a way which indicated that interpersonal skills and managerial ability were the most important influences on performance.

Experiential Learning

Lawrence (1986) explored the idea that knowledge was gained by experience, and he provided a useful insight; that experience "is what you know, not what happened to you. It is 'all in the mind', and some of it can be put there by educational processes". According to Westerlund and Sjostrand (1979), "learning is a basis for the recycling of information, and a process by which opinions and valuations are permanently changed".

Kolb and Fry (1975) described experiential learning as an integrated process of four stages, in which a current experience was followed by the collection of data and observations about it, which were then analysed to provide conclusions in the form of

experience to be used in modifying behaviour and the choice of new experiences. Thus, to be effective, learning required concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation.

Differences in learning style (Kolb and Fry, *ibid*; Kolb, 1984; Honey and Mumford, 1986) could help to explain why two managers, nominally the same in all respects, with similar training and development needs, would learn differently when exposed to exactly the same training or development opportunity, and where "one learns well and the other not so well or not at all" (Mumford, 1987a). While Kolb (1984) concentrated solely on the individual's approach to learning, Honey and Mumford (1986) developed their ideas on learning styles in the context of "normal managerial life" for the reason that certain learning activities "either suit or [do] not suit particular learning styles" (Mumford, 1987a).

The learning of managerial skills was for the most part, a product of a diverse range of 'natural' experiential sources, such as work, "and other events not deliberately planned for learning", although a significant contribution to managerial skills development could be made by formal education and training activities. "Most managers consider their skills to be learnable" (Burgoyne and Stuart, 1976). Silver (1987) however, warned that while learning by experience would in many cases be "the most important method of skill acquisition", it might be thought to "require little planning, since it cannot be

avoided".

Burgoyne and Stuart (1976) criticised the notion that there was a universally applicable set of managerial skills and attributes in all managerial situations, and recommended a contingency view which allowed for the acquisition and development of "situation-specific qualities and skills as they become relevant".

Burgoyne and Hodgson's (1983) research concentrated on what managers 'do' in their jobs, and how processes of learning affected this. Their focus was the process by which managers learned outside formal training episodes, and they followed Marton et al. (1977) in classifying 'learning' as experiences which resulted in a qualitative change in the way a manager conceived something. Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) suggested that when managers learned naturally from everyday experience, "the profounder forms of learning are incremental rather than sudden". Further, managers drew upon "background consciousness", internalised experience and previous learning, either consciously or unconsciously, "all the time" in problem-solving.

According to Davies and Easterby-Smith (1984), studies of managerial work were not in the past unduly concerned with development or learning which happened in the normal course of managers' jobs, although Stewart (1982) was "beginning to move into this area". Such lack of concern may have been less than prudent, if we assimilate Mumford's (1987b: 31) view that,

"For us to dismiss all the informal processes through which managers learn, on the grounds that they are not experiences explicitly designed for learning, is not only a nonsense but a harmful nonsense".

Instinct, Intuition and Personal Knowledge

It might perhaps be considered a nonsense to include 'intuition' in a discussion of knowledge in managerial work, as the term bears the connotation of an immediate flash of perception which does not derive from knowledge in any clear way. Some exploration, however, seems sensible, as managers "instinctively know" certain things (Sayles, 1964), they recognise things "often only intuitively" (Kotter, 1977), "intuition" is used to describe the cerebral processes involved in managerial activities (Mintzberg, 1975), and "magic" is involved in managerial work (Watson, 1986).

Bunge (1962) described intuition as "modes of perception (quick identification, clear understanding and interpretation ability)". An example of intuition, and intuitive behaviour in relation to problem-solving was outlined by Polanyi (1958), who suggested that, at the moment of discovery of what was believed to be a solution to a problem, "we have the vision of a solution which looks right and which we are confident to prove right".

The intuitive solution of problems, however, arose not "from some extra-sensory power of the brain", but rather from "long experience of the outcome...of various symbolic operations that are...daily intellectual companions" (Ziman, 1978). It was also possible that descriptions of "judgement" and "intuition" were

"merely labels for our ignorance" in relation to the way managers used the knowledge which was "locked deep inside their brains" when they engaged in time-scheduling, information processing and decision-making (Mintzberg, 1975).

Kotter (1977) suggested that "instincts" were needed for the effective acquisition and use of power, and that effective managers recognised, "often only intuitively" the importance of power-acquisition and use in the successful execution of their jobs. Stewart (1981) also mentioned instinct, and wrote that some explanation for managers' reliance on habit and instinct might be found in the fragmented character of much managerial work.

Jacobs (1989: 34) supported the importance of intuition, together with other "so-called 'soft' personal qualities like assertiveness, impact, creativity [and] sensitivity" in the managerial role, which,

"...are difficult to measure under any circumstances...does this mean that they should be valued as less important or relevant than skills or abilities that are easier to measure?".

The internalised, or personal knowledge from which a manager draws when acting intuitively would appear to be a valuable asset. Some managers however, experienced difficulty in articulating their unique knowledge to subordinates, with the result that there was "no means to accumulate knowledge and build on the successes and failures of the past" (Sayles, 1964). Managers might also be reluctant to share the knowledge they

have gained from experience (Pfeffer, 1981). Levitt (1989: 8) suggested that "the knowledge that is most precious is that which cannot be passed on or taught", and that,

"The possessor of knowledge does not need to know what he knows in order to use it and use it very well...he doesn't have to explain it".

If each manager possesses knowledge that is partly unique, the product of learning through personal experience, it becomes difficult to accommodate the concept of a 'holistic' approach to management training. While formal educational processes may provide technical, specialised and other forms of knowledge, and programmes designed specifically for experiential learning purposes may provide other useful inputs to the individual's knowledge base, we are still left with an area of knowledge which cannot be legislated for by formal/structured means.

When we consider the nature of managerial work, some of which has been shown by research to be fragmented, episodic, reactive and opportunistic, with substantial elements of variety and interpersonal communication, it is perhaps not surprising that managers learn much in the course of their jobs. According to Jacobs (1989), "the reality of work dictates that we rarely learn in isolation". "The confused and chaotic reality of management" means that many learning experiences are "not only informal but accidental" (Mumford, 1987b). These are the types of learning process which Burgoyne (1988: 40) called 'natural' management development, and in expansion of that concept, he wrote:

"Processes occur, which are not deliberately planned or contrived for this purpose, which shape both the structural and developmental aspects of managerial careers. These are inevitable, usually good and destined always to be the 'major provider' of management development".

This has some implications for knowledge use, because if we are to believe the authors of some management texts, management theories, in whatever form, can generally be 'applied' irrespective of particular circumstances. Research has challenged this premise, and has queried the suitability of many general prescriptions for management. The premise has been questioned also in relation to managerial knowledge use.

Knowledge Use

In a paper in which he described two models of technical change Glover (1987) argued that the nature of knowledge use had been "misunderstood and misrepresented" by many English-speaking social scientists, and suggested that the two models, the Technik and the Science leads to Technology leads to Hardware (STH) ones originally articulated by Sorge and Hartmann in 1980, had relevance "far beyond their central concern" of technical change.

The STH model drew on a homo sapiens depiction of the individual's role in technical change, where rationally-guided search behaviour dominated human activity and formal scientific knowledge was seen as the key to innovation. Innovation was seen as "discontinuous...involving revolutionary and dramatic changes". In this model, which was popular in the USA, Britain, and other English-speaking countries, new scientific discoveries

were seen as major sources of technical advancement.

The Technik model on the other hand, depicted technical change as "a response to socio-economic and technical problems", and assumed that technical change consisted of

"...gradual, perceived improvement,..largely involving learning by doing. Scientific knowledge, old or new, is used but it is only one input among many. Other inputs are variously commercial, social, political, cultural, economic and (especially) technical...innovation is thought of as a continuous phenomenon".

In essence, this is the theory of the individual as 'homo faber', "the maker and doer".

Although these models of knowledge use were originally concerned with technical change, they also provide an insight into the very problem we have just considered, that of reconciling prescription with what we know happens in managerial work. The manager as homo faber seems almost a familiar figure. The two models also provide an insight into the concept of the 'appliance of science' which is a recurrent feature in discussions of the relevance and 'application' of the social and behavioural sciences in personnel work.

Knowledge Used in Personnel Management

The question of knowledge in personnel work was briefly discussed in the 'professionalisation' section of Chapter Two, where it emerged as neither exclusive nor distinct. One writer summarised it as being "too general or vague...or too narrow and specific" (Patten, 1968). This statement gives some indication of the difficulty that writers have experienced in

identifying a coherent body of knowledge used in personnel work. Ritzer and Trice (1969), for example, felt that because personnel work was organizationally based, and thus practice varied from employer to employer, it was hard to determine "what technical skills it should require, and from what body of theory these should be derived".

Two-thirds of Watson's (1977) personnel managers were "not able to identify a body of knowledge or theory" used in their work. Despite this, half of the managers who gave that response also said that they thought such a body existed, which Watson felt related to their "general feelings about professionalism".

Tyson (1983) wrote that no "clearly defined exclusive body of knowledge has been discerned", and later, that the knowledge "needed to be successful in personnel is increasingly eclectic" (Tyson, 1987). "Of all the major areas of management, personnel has the weakest conceptual base..." (Manning, 1983). This last point gives rise to the question of why it is classified as 'weak'. Could it perhaps be because it is so diverse, and difficult to classify?

The Social and/or Behavioural Sciences

One body of knowledge which has consistently been presented as being relevant to personnel work is made up by the social and/or behavioural sciences, which Sayles (1964) called the "'softer' fields of knowledge". Enthusiasm for the social sciences is apparent in the suggestions that: personnel managers should be made into applied behavioural scientists (Dunnette and Bass,

1963); that the "very considerable skills" required in personnel management "are more likely to be found with social scientists than with personnel managers" (Henstridge, 1975); and that a personnel manager will generate confidence in his ability as a professional,

"only if he has a good working knowledge of the theories of the behavioural sciences and an ability to apply this knowledge to the analysis of the problems of organization".

(Lupton, 1964: 57)

The social sciences were "one of the most amazing sources of expert knowledge" (Odiorne, 1967). They had provided, in "an ascending spiral of theory and practice", "certain tools" needed by personnel managers, and had "played a significant part in providing the ideological basis on which personnel management has uneasily rested" (Cherns, 1972). Further, a tendency for "the professional social scientist...to see himself as the technologist and the personnel specialist as the technician", had led to an "uneasy marriage" (Henstridge, 1975).

Heller (1961) suggested that critics of the use of the social sciences in a "powerful, specialised personnel function", usually based their opposition on "the immaturity of the subject, its contradictions and other weaknesses". In the 1970s, "partly as a result of criticism of the social sciences", the IPM, "along with many practising managers, gave up the struggle to find congruency between the practical techniques of personnel management and the philosophical overtones of social science" (Tyson and Fell, 1986). The IPM's former claim that

"the roots of personnel management lay in the social sciences", and its emphasis on them as a disciplinary base in the examination syllabus "has largely been replaced by a concern for practicality" (Guest, 1989).

There was "real difficulty...in assessing the value of social science findings to a particular problem" (Barry, 1968).

Another difficulty arose from the fact that "the study of sociology and psychology [had] not typically been for managerial purposes" (Tyson and Fell, 1986). Once managers realised, however, that there might be value in the social sciences, they tended to jump on the "bandwagon...hoping to find a panacea" (Barry, 1968). The 'application' of social science techniques thus acquired a reputation of "fads, fashions, and gimmicks" (Patten, 1968). Worse, they came to be "jokingly regarded as a 'flavour of the month' approach" (Gill, 1982).

Actual application demanded "a high degree of selectivity" for the findings of social science research could not be "imported into a company wholesale" (Barry, 1968). Managers required not only a knowledge of the concepts, "and their use in their own situation", but also "the organizational climate in which they [could] find application" (Cherns, 1972). "A sophisticated analysis of the social and power structure of the organization" was required before importing practice from another organization (Cherns, 1979). According to Williams (1983) this was because there was a risk "that a model or technique which is successful in one setting may not be in another".

Cherns (1972) suggested that the predominant means of diffusing social science knowledge was through "packages and devices", which Watson (1977) said were marketed by "behavioural science entrepreneurs". In recruitment, companies seemed to be "easily seduced by the pseudo-scientific feel of..psychological quizzes" which were not the best methods available, were not based on up-to-date research, and which had not proven their worth (Hubbard, 1984). For example, in psychological testing, practitioners needed to know the difference between normative tests (which allowed comparisons of people, e.g., Cattell 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire), and ipsative tests, (which gave a greater focus on the individual's own relative strengths, e.g. Kostick Perception and Preference Inventory), otherwise they might regard the two types of test as interchangeable, when they were not (Fletcher et al., 1989).

Gill (1982; 25) felt that in problem-solving, leadership and organizational change, managers had been "greatly influenced by the large number of attractively packaged and designed commercial social science approaches", but,

"Paradoxically, the academic social science community regards most of these as inadequately tested, diagnostically weak and based on partial, out of date theory".

Anthony (1977) suggested that, as research had not validated the hypothesis "that all 'behavioural science' management teaching is rubbish...we shall have to content ourselves with the unproved assertion that most of it seems to be so". Burgoyne (1983) however, argued that the more usable and popular

behavioural science theories and models were so, "because they prove to be generally useful interpretive frameworks, rather than because they are validated theories in the absolute truth/unilateral technology tradition".

Williams (1983: 13) provided a list of "just a few of the better known" behavioural science concepts, theories and models which might assist management decision-making by aiding the selection, organization, and interpretation of information, "thereby enabling new insights to occur": in tackling motivational problems - hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1943), theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 1960), motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), and the achievement motive (McClelland, 1961); in tackling problems of leadership - System 1 to 4 (Likert, 1967), and the managerial grid (Blake and Mouton, 1964); in thinking about organizational design - organic and mechanistic systems (Burns and Stalker, 1961), and socio-technical systems (Trist et al., 1963); in thinking about organizational changes and management development - unfreezing-changing-refreezing (Lewin, 1947), and action learning (Revans, 1971); and in trying to understand industrial relations problems - unitary versus pluralistic systems (Fox, 1966b).

Williams (1983) suggested that research could aid managers in using the social sciences, either through the "general knowledge" route of using findings "which have become part of the pool of knowledge readily available to managers", or the "personnel research" route, which represented "more of a

tailor-made" input to managerial decision-making. Williams felt that the strength of the behavioural sciences lay in "adherence to the norms of the scientific approach in generating new knowledge".

According to Gill (1982: 27), however, this very 'adherence' could cause problems:

"The increasing emphasis in academic circles upon epistemological validity, methodological rigour and theoretical abstraction is widening the gulf between the rational goals of academic social science and the incremental praxis of social science utilisation".

Managers found difficulty in understanding social science literature, because it was "expressed in jargon designed deliberately to make simple ideas difficult to understand", which Gill felt was a result of researchers' pursuit of "academic prestige" which caused them to develop "an unintelligible jargon of their own" in order to impress each other. While Gill conceded that there was some truth in managers' complaints about jargon, he suggested that such complaints might be "simply one of a number of managerial defences which underlie their basic concerns about social science research", in that it is "potentially very threatening to core issues of managerial ideology and values in ways which financial, economic and marketing data are not". The concepts promoted in some social scientific literature aimed at managers might also "be quite inadequate for promoting [the sorts of] social changes which the application of those very concepts demand" (Anthony, 1977).

Psychology has provided some ideas for managers which have proved popular amongst them (Tyson, 1987). Watson (1977) suggested that, while some of his respondents placed a "strong emphasis" on psychology, there was "a tendency to think in terms of some folk-lore concept" rather than any of the details of the academic discipline. There was "little evidence that managers are disposed to discover the value of the social sciences as academic disciplines" (Tyson, 1986).

Watson (1977) felt that a partial explanation of the "clear tendency for personnel managers to work within a *psychologistic* frame of reference" was that it might reflect a lack of education and training, for the majority of personnel specialists, in the more social-scientific approaches. Even those of his respondents who had received such education and training, however, did not refer to 'social' factors, and Watson suggested that "situational exigencies" were an explanation of this phenomenon as personnel managers were pressured towards "short-term pragmatism" regarding the social sciences. Watson (1980) wrote that this psychologism could to a large extent be explained by "the fact that people in management are paid to solve short-term problems, to be pragmatic, to get the job done - in short, to be practical". According to Tyson (1986) however, "the popularity of some ideas drawn from psychology only reinforces the diversity of knowledge bases".

The Diversity of Knowledge Used in Personnel

Earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that the knowledge

used in personnel work is diverse, increasingly eclectic, and does not comprise a clearly defined and identifiable body of knowledge. Thus, while Tyson and Fell (1986) wrote that the social sciences had provided knowledge and techniques which could comprise "the basis for the claim to professional status", clearly those are not exclusive inputs to personnel specialists' knowledge.

Honey (1976: 35) provided a useful indication of the range of technical or specialised knowledge required in personnel work, in his list of thirty types of personnel activity. He suggested that personnel managers should be able to "talk sensibly and authoritatively about at least 75 per cent" of them. More recently, Tyson and Fell (1986) summarised the personnel activities involved in employment, recruitment and selection, rewards, employee or industrial relations, training, appraisal, and health, safety and welfare.

It is clear from lists of the activities performed in personnel management that specialists must be proficient in both interpersonal and numerical skills. "Many of the technical skills used in personnel work", for example in interviewing, counselling, and negotiation, "are interpersonal" (Tyson, 1983). The requirement for numerical ability, however, might present problems for managers who have highly-developed interpersonal skills (Mintzberg, 1976). This last point is of relevance to part of the data reported in Chapter Four, in which some interviewees' choice of personnel as a career was influenced by

their assessment of their own abilities, which showed their strengths to be interpersonal, rather than numerical.

If personnel specialists are to perform a range of diverse activities, and/or to talk authoritatively about them, they must have the knowledge to do so. Guest and Kenny (1983) suggested that personnel specialists must possess "certain kinds of background knowledge" which extended far beyond the technical or specialist knowledge implicit in the performance of personnel activities. The main types of knowledge depicted by Guest and Kenny were those of organizational context, legislation, procedures and techniques.

Knowledge of the organizational context comprised, for Guest and Kenny, its structure, technology, products or services, key characteristics of the workforce and of local labour markets, in which knowledge of the behavioural sciences was "essential to appreciate the significance of certain types of technology, market or worker orientation on structure and action within the organization". Knowledge of research in areas related to proposed employment strategies was "helpful".

Knowledge of the law was "essential". While legislation could act as a major constraint on personnel managers, it could also provide opportunities, acting as a "lever for action". The possession of information which was out of date, "particularly with the Employment Appeals Tribunal decisions", could lead to "very damaging" repercussions for "both the organization and the personnel function".

It was necessary "to know, or to be able to find out quickly, about the procedures associated with action", otherwise decisions would be "unrealistic and inappropriate". Further, "knowledge of procedures, techniques and of the criteria which influence choice of approach is part of the picture", together with the skills of understanding, analysis, and presentation of relevant information, necessary to achieve a "sensible" personnel information system. An awareness of behavioural science diagnostic techniques (e.g. Child, 1977; Thurley and Wirdenius, 1973) was "helpful", although these were not always feasible in practice (Guest and Kenny, 1983).

"The practical problem is that there is a great variety of personnel techniques, and it is almost impossible to possess a comprehensive knowledge across more than a fairly narrow range of personnel activities".

(Guest and Kenny, p7)

Personnel managers should have knowledge of the choices available to them, and "an understanding of the criteria on which to base a choice and the skills to carry out the necessary diagnosis". This presupposed a knowledge of procedures, as limited knowledge of them would result in "sub-optimal" decisions (Guest and Kenny).

Personnel managers should also know about the criteria to be considered when choosing from a range of possible procedures, in order to obtain the most feasible choice of strategy for a particular set of circumstances. An awareness and understanding of various behavioural insights and analyses "on the nature of organizations and the influences on change in organizations" was

"invaluable" (Guest and Kenny).

A range of skills, in interviewing, lecturing, negotiation, presentation of industrial tribunal cases, job analysis and evaluation, were "likely to be helpful" in implementing policies and procedures. The required skills were analytical, for statistical analysis, and social, for "facilitating discussion, eliciting information, listening, showing sympathy, instructing and persuading" (Guest and Kenny).

The amount of authority held by a personnel manager could affect both his ability to choose policies and procedures, and his ability to implement them. He must consider "the strength of the barriers and of the pressures that can be brought to bear. Inevitably intra-organizational conflicts and politics will play an important part of this process". An understanding of power and politics in organizations "is invariably an essential prerequisite to effective personnel practice at all levels" (Guest and Kenny).

The types of knowledge outlined by Guest and Kenny are diverse, and include the contingency elements of organizational context, feasibility of practice, levels of authority, power, and politics. Guest and Kenny did not present their various points as comprising a 'body' of knowledge, but rather as a guide to the knowledge used in personnel work. Indeed, the introduction of the term 'body of knowledge', with its connotations of an entity of knowledge which can be 'applied' by all those who have access to it, is an inappropriate description for a range of

knowledge which includes contingency factors. Instead, with their emphasis on the practical, Guest and Kenny provided the concept of each personnel specialist having a knowledge 'bank' with many different 'accounts', which could be used by making deposits or withdrawals, according to circumstances. This concept seems attuned to the practicalities of personnel management as it acknowledges personal experience, as well as other forms of knowledge. We shall return to these points in Chapter Ten.

Clearly, the notion of a body of 'relevant' academic knowledge, with its inference that it is codified, defined, and generally applicable, seems to have presented the respondents in Watson's (1977) study with some difficulty in identification. The one-third of the sample who did perceive such a body of knowledge tended to classify it under the headings of legislation, techniques, or social science. While some emphasis on legislation, techniques, and social sciences was perhaps to be expected, the complete absence of any mention of additional forms of knowledge merits some investigation. The personnel specialists in Watson's (1977) study were, presumably, drawing daily from the types of knowledge outlined above by Guest and Kenny (1983).

The most obvious explanation is that Watson's (1977) question was framed to elicit responses about "a basic body of knowledge or an underlying body of theory". This wording precluded consideration of knowledge used in personnel work which was

neither "basic" (i.e. generally applicable) nor derived from theory. The types of knowledge which were, therefore, implicitly excluded were those which enabled managers to perform their jobs: knowledge of their organizations' contexts, their power structures and political environments, the criteria for making feasible choices, and interpersonal skills. These all involve managers' internalised/personal knowledge. In making choices, for example, managers were influenced by their personal knowledge of situations (Stewart, 1982).

The presence in each personnel specialist's knowledge 'bank', of personal knowledge raises the hypothetical question of whether Watson's (1977) respondents would have been able to identify and articulate such knowledge, had he asked a question simply about the knowledge that they used in personnel work. Possibly, they might have had some difficulty in doing so, if we are to follow Sayles' (1964) and Levitt's (1989) suggestions that managers might not be able to identify exactly which forms of knowledge they use, or be able to explain it to others. They might also not wish to share their knowledge gained by experience (Pfeffer, 1981).

Personnel Knowledge Acquisition

Earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that managers amass knowledge in the course of their jobs, and that they learn by practical experience as well as by reading and education. In personnel management, there is "no common pattern of preparation for the occupation" (Ritzer and Trice, 1969). There are,

however, "many paths to the achievement of professional proficiency and competence" (Cowan, 1988). The path of experiential learning will be explored in Chapter Nine, together with other data about the knowledge the respondents used in their work, and how they acquired, used, and updated it. Our concerns here are the types of educational opportunities which are available for both potential and practising personnel specialists who wish to obtain 'academic' knowledge related to personnel work, together with writings on 'desirable' training for practitioners.

Various educational establishments throughout the UK offer degree or diploma courses with a substantial personnel management/human resource management content. The qualifications obtained from these courses, however, do not always secure automatic membership of the IPM. Graduates from courses which have not been accredited by the IPM for membership purposes may find themselves with an 'academic' qualification which merely allows credits towards Institute qualifications, with further periods of study required if IPM membership is sought. While the IPM regulates entry to its ranks by examination, it is involved also in providing educational material for members and non-members alike, through its publications and training courses.

Whittaker (1989) wrote that the emphasis of the IPM qualification was mainly academic in the 1970's, and that "in an effort to be truly professional, the emphasis on the practical was

neglected for the theoretical". As a newly-qualified personnel specialist, she " had to learn rather quickly through experience". Watson's (1977) interviewees viewed the IPM as "a useful source of knowledge and information", but expressed reservations about its rigorous entry examinations. Often those reservations centred on the importance of experience to the personnel manager. During the 1980s however, the emphasis in IPM courses progressively moved away from a heavy reliance on academic subjects, such as the social sciences, towards a more practical skills-oriented approach (Whittaker, 1989; Guest, 1989).

Nevertheless, a survey of personnel managers and directors of 68 major companies, conducted by Shackleton and Taylor (1988) had, as "one of the more disturbing findings", a "generally negative attitude" to the current IPM syllabus, in that the respondents still thought the course too theoretical. Three-quarters of them felt that the best form of training was "on the job", and "'hands on' experience was considered essential to the formation of a competent personnel manager". Nearly two-thirds of the respondents felt that personnel managers lacked training. Over 90% felt that a broad knowledge of other functions was either essential or very important, yet half of the respondents believed that personnel managers generally did not have this. Foulkes (1975) suggested that personnel managers would not have credibility with or be consulted by line management if they showed "ignorance of or lack of interest in basic information about the company".

The foregoing has indicated something about the perceived importance of practical training both to the IPM and practitioners.

Shackleton and Taylor (1988) however, highlighted a major problem with 'on the job' training; it did not generally provide new ideas, techniques, models or frameworks. It may be significant that only 22% of their respondents felt it essential to keep up with new personnel ideas.

Textbooks and other publications may play a predominant role in the dissemination of new ideas. It was suggested earlier that the personnel, along with some other management literature, suffered in the past from a heavy element of prescription, which resulted in a gap between theory and practice when the prescriptions were of the wrong sort for general 'application'.

Legge and Exley (1975) expressed a hope for "fewer repetitious and prescriptive texts, that appear to assume that there exists a consensus about what personnel specialists ideally should be doing and how they should be doing it". There was an implication in most of the literature that there was "only one kind of personnel management, and that it is of general application" (Henstridge, 1975). Thus, most textbooks offered practitioners help which was only of a background or indirect kind (Guest and Kenny, (1983).

Tyson and Fell (1986) suggested that prescriptive generalisations arose because authors did not have information on sector

or otherwise specific organizational contexts. Activities were listed "usually without reference to the needs of the business, or the culture of the organization", and while prescriptive statements told personnel practitioners what to do, they did not always advise on how to do it, nor gave any indication whether certain activities were relevant or practicable in the practitioners' own organizations. Guest and Horwood (1980) felt that textbooks had "largely developed from a priori reasoning and [were] not usually based on any empirical analysis".

Watson (1977) recognised the 'gap', but did not consider it a major concern in his book, because there was "something of a dialectical relationship" in which some ideas would be taken up by practitioners, and others (due to prevention by "situational pressures") would not. There existed a "two-way processual relationship" between thinkers and practitioners. Later he argued that there was a "multiplicity of theoretical materials" available, whose relevance to practice would,

"...be dependent on the ability of practitioners to understand the range of ideas and on their ability to select and apply insight and suggestions from them which are appropriate to the practical problems which they face at a particular time".
 (Watson, 1986: 3)

Even so, times change. The current preoccupations in personnel management are different to those of twenty years ago (Armstrong, 1989). In his interviews with twenty personnel directors, the emphasis was on "competitive advantage, leading edge, added value, performance management and the bottom line". He felt that twenty years previously, it would have been,

"organization development, manpower planning, systematic training, job enrichment, salary administration, performance appraisal and the behavioural sciences, as if these were techniques or areas of knowledge which had intrinsic value and did not need to be considered in terms of fit with business strategies or impact on business results". (p.53)

Armstrong's respondents frequently emphasised "the need to have line management as well as personnel experience". An emphasis on line management experience may, in part, be seen as an attempt to escape the image of the personnel manager "being a narrow specialist immersed in the more esoteric aspects of his function" (Petrie, 1965). More importantly, however, it can be viewed as an insight into how personnel specialists may fulfil their organizational responsibilities in a more effective way, by giving a broader knowledge of the most central tasks of their employing units. Cadbury (1982) argued that organizations should have 'rounded' business teams, in which members were general managers first, and specialists second. In that way, personnel management would be more integrated into the running of the business, and questions of "where the loyalties of the personnel manager really lie would become an archaic irrelevance".

Tyson and Fell (1986) wished to see more "broad management topics" in the training scheme, and "more personnel specialists with line management experience". Training in line management and the social sciences were not seen "as alternatives", although the question arose of how sufficient training in both could be achieved. They argued that, because personnel work was so important, practitioners "ought to be prepared to obtain an

in-depth knowledge of the social sciences", if they took the occupation "seriously". An "ideal profile for the personnel specialist" was, therefore, "a degree or diploma level course in the social sciences followed by training in management".

In practice, this 'ideal profile' might be difficult to achieve. Those practitioners who have not made the personnel occupation their initial career choice are not as well placed to fulfil the 'profile' as those who have. Indeed, they may reverse the sequence of training for the occupation proposed by Tyson and Fell.

Fewer than one-quarter of Watson's (1977) respondents entered personnel management as 'initial choosers'. The remainder of his sample entered either as a result of their own desire for change, or through a change initiated by their organizations. The diversity of personnel managers' backgrounds was noted by Guest and Horwood (1981), and while that diversity might go some way towards fulfilling Tyson and Fell's (1986) 'profile', it might also work against their desire to undergo 'in-depth' study of the social sciences to diploma or degree level at a point some time into their careers.

Indeed, many of the authors referred to so far have indicated that there is a groundswell of opinion in the occupation against the social sciences being regarded as the predominant source of knowledge in personnel management. There has been a reversal of emphasis, from the academic to the practical.

Yet, at the onset of the 1990s, there is little consensus of opinion about the best way to train entrants to the occupation. The absence of 'one best way' is not however, necessarily a failing of those who analyse and write about personnel management, or of those who perform it. Perhaps the lack of consensus indicates a recognition of the diversity of the occupation, both of its tasks and of its practitioners. Diverse backgrounds and modes of entry, varied practice in different organizations, and multiple means of obtaining knowledge and skills, all legislate against prescriptive approaches to the training of personnel specialists. In many respects, the issue of formulating adequate training for personnel specialists parallels that which exists in management training generally, concerning the elements of knowledge which enable them to do their jobs.

The Management Charter Initiative

Burgoyne (1988) defined 'management development' as "the management of managerial careers in an organizational context". Management development, "by its very nature" was concerned with the future (Sadler, 1989). Both of these concerns were apparent in the emergence of the Management Charter Initiative (MCI) in 1987, promoted by the Council for Management Education and Development (CMED). The birth of the MCI was timely, as reports by Handy (1987) and Constable and McCormick (1987) highlighted deficiencies in existing methods of management training in Britain, and the urgent need to remedy these by more systematic training.

Day (1988) provided a detailed analysis of the organization, aims and projected development of the MCI, together with its Code of Practice. Our concerns here, however, are selective, being the aspects of the MCI which relate to ways in which managers will participate in, and benefit from a 'chartered management' education programme.

The ultimate aim of the MCI was strength in the UK economy, achieved through the competitiveness of business, and the enterprise, leadership and professionalism of managers. These would derive from management being a recognised profession, which would be attained by inputs from: individuals, showing personal initiative in gaining management qualifications; business, through their participation in charter group organizations, and giving their support; and education and government, by providing both learning and work (Day, 1988).

The chartered qualification for managers would be a "high-status designation", at the three levels of Associate, Chartered, and Fellow, which would each be attained according to a 'ladder of progression', which combined education, skills and experience. The emphasis of the training was competence, "the ability to put skills and knowledge in practice", which stressed

"..'outputs' from the management development process; this approach stands in marked contrast to the traditional academic model of studying a body of knowledge and then being 'tested' by a formal examination, primarily on retention of information rather than understanding and application".

(Day, 1988: 30)

The standards of competence to be attained by managers concerned

"a widely acceptable inventory of the main competences required" which were developed by the Standards Project research [earlier described in the penultimate section of Chapter One] (Day, 1988). A two-level model was produced of what managers "should be able to achieve": Management I concerned the needs of all managers, while Management II concerned "those of a middle manager who would be required to manage other managers and deal with considerable change, conflicting interests, and uncertainty" (Day, 1990).

Key purposes of organizations were identified, which engendered related key roles. Each key role had related 'units of competence', which were the main tasks associated with each role. Within each unit were 'elements', the activities which achieved tasks. Further, each element was ascribed associated performance criteria, together with 'range indicators' which identified the parameters of contextual factors which could aid or hinder the manager, indicated appropriate methods of analysis, specified which activities, staff and technology were related to the element, and indicated the implications of change caused by its performance (MCI, 1990). The standards were a flexible basis for development, and "not a constraining framework" (Day, 1988).

The MCI also "recognised the importance...of underlying personal qualities, skills and attributes", and provided a framework of 'Personal Competences' for managers (Day, 1990). The personal competence analysis described interpersonal behaviour and

tactics, and how these could maximise the outcomes of interaction (MCI, 1990).

The notion of standards of management practice in terms of both managerial and personal competence provided a marriage, long-awaited in management literature, between what managers do, and how they do it. Managerial work was shown by the MCI Management Standards Project to be an integrated process of the 'what' of 'POSDCORB'/traditional management theory, and the interactive 'how' identified by empirical researchers. While it might have been expected that any training approach which integrated education, skills development and practical experience would be welcomed, the notion of the management charter was the subject of some debate, much of which centred on the idea of chartered status for managers (Day, 1988).

The purpose of a chartered qualification, Milborrow (1988) argued, was "to get managers who are better informed and better able"; it was not supposed to be "a binary ticket, that you have or have not. It is a learning experience with a series of benchmarks". Garratt (1988), chairman of the Association of Management Education and Development (AMED), however, doubted whether the MCI would ever become operational, and if it did, as "a formal structure" it would "kill the energy and innovation needed in management education", and would also have to guard against being "elitist and inward-looking". Further, AMED queried where the courses would get suitably trained trainers, but in any event, felt that a prescriptive list of competences

was "not what was needed now", especially as it did not believe "any list of managerial competences to be universally applicable".

Barker (1988) argued from the standpoint that a chartered body was not an appropriate structure for a professional management organization. Although a chartered qualification had status, it might not gain respect, as it was not linked to specific specialist jobs, but to management, which was "too wide and varied". It might also be regarded as a "licence to practise". Barker preferred that existing professional organizations should expand their current qualifications "to encompass the management competences".

Burgoyne (1988) felt that parts of the "new vision" of the MCI "looked suspiciously like old ones", in that they focussed "too much on the individual manager...and too little [on] the organization as a whole".

Although Mant (1975) wrote that managers should have "a healthy scepticism" towards viewing management as a profession, it is understandable that managers might wish to participate in a development programme which, through a combination of education, skills development and work experience would provide a portable, high-status qualification. With this end in sight, it is not difficult to imagine that some managers might brush criticisms of the qualification aside, in their own self-interest.

The Professional Management Foundation Course

In September 1989, in partnership with the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators and the Institute of Administrative Management, the IPM offered a single-entry route towards management qualifications for the first time. Available initially in six colleges in the UK, the Professional Management Foundation Course contained Human Resources as one of its four main modules. The course was designed to "be more flexible in educational approach and more open to students of the right calibre" than those run previously by the participating institutes (Barker, 1989). It was also the course that Barker was involved in developing when he criticised the concept of 'chartered' status for managers (Barker, 1988).

Sturridge (1989: 15) felt that the personnel profession "should be cheering" this "opportunity to reshape qualifications for [it] with a more practical base". The three institutes concerned,

"...have taken the first steps towards treating management as a common element in several professions. They have committed themselves to the view that management skills and their common elements could and should be studied before the skills side of a particular profession. The big change is that the courses are far more practical than theoretical. This is something that elements in the Institute [IPM] have been crying out for, for a long time...".

The current preoccupation in personnel management with things practical signifies that the personnel occupation is engaged in a quest for knowledge which its practitioners can use. The perceived reality of personnel management, and the supposed inadequacies of former 'academic' approaches, have apparently

indicated the path to follow in the future. Should that future hold the prospect of the personnel role being absorbed into the ranks of general management, it may perhaps prove that personnel specialists who hold the 'single-entry' qualification can more easily assimilate into those ranks than their more 'professional' colleagues.

Sufficient time has not elapsed since the introduction of the Professional Management Foundation Course, or indeed the Management Charter Initiative, to allow objective assessment. What can be said at present, however, is that each would appear to embody an attempt to prepare their students for the real and practical world of management. We shall take a further look at these training initiatives in Chapter Ten.

CHAPTER FOUR : WHO IS THE PERSONNEL SPECIALIST?

Introduction

The foci of this chapter are the employers and the backgrounds of the respondents. First, however, it gives a brief account of the method used in the study. It then goes on to examine the respondents' current employment, their previous employment, their modes of entry to the personnel occupation, their reasons for entering personnel work, and their educational and social backgrounds. The data presented here will partly contextualise material reported in later chapters.

Method

In January 1985, following the piloting of the questionnaire with 33 personnel specialists in 10 organizations which used Dundee Institute of Technology, an attempt was made to contact as many personnel practitioners as possible in Scotland. The means of doing this and the sources of the questions are detailed in Appendix I.

Briefly, 517 organizations were contacted. 108 were not eligible because they had gone out of business, were duplicated, or had no personnel specialist. The respondent sample is made up of eligible organizations and pilot ones, thus:

Respondent sample

<u>Type of Organization</u>	<u>Organizations</u>		<u>Questionnaires received</u>
	<u>Approached</u>	<u>Responded</u>	
Eligible	409	164	196
Pilot	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>33</u>
	<u>419</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>229</u>

The organizations' response-rate was 42% (174). Details of multiple responses are shown in Appendix 2, Table C. Only 10% (53) of the original sample of organizations were direct refusals.

The second sample was interviewed, and aimed to include both respondents and non-respondents. 134 of the survey respondents had expressed a willingness to be interviewed. 68 (50%) were interviewed, aiming to cover all 27 organizational activities detailed in Appendix 2, Table A. 43 non-respondents were also contacted by telephone, and 41 (95%) agreed to an interview. 109 interviewees were seen for about an hour each between March and June 1985.

The third sample was fifteen senior executives who were interviewed between February and March 1986, to get an organizational perspective on personnel specialists. All 27 sectors had been aimed at, and there were 12 refusals (55% response).

Bias in the sample

The respondent sample (229) is not obviously biased in any known way. The interview sample (109) was for practical reasons biased towards less remote areas, but still covered an area from Aberdeen to Glasgow to Ayr to Edinburgh, in locations which could be reached by train and/or bus. Although three out of six sectors which had no survey respondents were included for interviews, there were three sectors in which no interviews were obtained. These were:

- 9. Other transport equipment
- 16. Wholesale distribution and repairs
- 27. Amalgamations: services.

The senior executive sample were arranged via the practitioner interview sample, and must be considered slightly accidental.

Employers

a) Formal status

Details of response rates to the survey, and of the composition of the sample appear in Appendix 2, where Table A shows the main activities performed by the respondents' employing establishments. Table 4.1 below shows that 80% (182) of the sample worked for private sector employers, and 20% (47) for public sector ones.

Table 4.1

Formal status of employing organizations

<u>STATUS</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Limited Company	172	75
Co-operative	1	0
Nationalised Industry	14	6
Other Public Corporation	3	1
QUANGOs	5	2
Local/Central Govt., (incl. N.H.S. and local Education Authorities)	23	10
Other (eg Mutual Companies)	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

b) Number of establishments

19% (43) of the respondents worked in single-establishment organizations, while 81% (186) were employed by concerns with more than one establishment. Respondents whose organizations had more than one establishment were asked to indicate the total

number of establishments operated in the UK. 13% (29) of the respondents indicated that this information was not known to them. This group worked in the N.H.S., central and local government, multiple retailing, and nationalised industries.

Table 4.2 below shows the number of establishments operated by the respondents' employers in the UK.

Table 4.2
Number of establishments operated by parent organization in UK

<u>Establishments</u>	<u>ALL</u>		<u>MULTI-ESTABLISHMENT</u>	
	N	N	N	%
1	43	19	-	-
2 - 9	77	34	77	49
10 - 19	14	6	14	9
20 - 29	23	10	23	15
30 - 39	5	2	5	3
40 - 49	5	2	5	3
50 - 59	10	11	10	6
60 - 99	6	3	6	4
100 - 199	7	3	7	4
200 - 299	4	2	4	3
400 - 499	3	1	3	2
Over 1000	3	1	3	2
Not known	29	13	-	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>100</u>

Thus, 53% (120) of the sample were employed in organizations which had fewer than 10 establishments in the UK.

c) Number of personnel specialists employed by organizations

12% (27) of respondents were sole personnel specialists in their organizations. Table 4.3 below shows the number of personnel specialists employed in the respondents' organizations. There were 37 (16%) missing values in this table, which may reflect a similar lack of knowledge about the organization as that shown in connection with Table 4.2 above.

Table 4.3

Numbers of personnel specialists employed in organization

<u>No. of specialists</u>	<u>ALL</u>		<u>MULTI-SPECIALIST</u>	
	N	%	N	%
1	26	11	-	-
2 - 10	90	39	90	54
11 - 20	22	10	22	13
21 - 50	27	12	27	16
Over 50	27	12	27	16
Non-response	37	16	-	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>99</u>

In the multi-specialist responses, just over half reported between two and ten specialists.

d) Numbers of employees in respondents' organizations

Table 4.4 below shows that 93% (170) of the respondents who answered a question about the numbers of employees worked in organizations which employed more than 500 people (N = 182).

Table 4.4

Numbers of employees in respondents' organizations

<u>Numbers employed</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>%</u>
	N	
Under 100	3	2
101 - 500	9	5
501 - 1000	22	12
1001 - 2000	26	14
2001 - 5000	30	17
5001 - 7500	9	5
7501 - 10000	8	4
Over 10000	<u>75</u>	<u>41</u>
Column Totals	<u>182</u>	<u>100</u>

The question which generated these figures was pre-coded in the questionnaire, to cover the possibility that respondents might not know the exact head-count, if it was requested. The large response to the highest pre-coded category, "over 10000", was obtained from practitioners working in multiple retailing, oil exploration and production, the N.H.S., central and local government, coal, gas, transport, electronic engineering, and

vehicle manufacture. Only 7% (12) worked in organizations with under 500 employees.

21% (47) of respondents (229) worked in organizations which were not owned by UK concerns. Further information was not available from five respondents, but ownership was noted as American by 15% (35), Dutch by 1% (2), French by 1% (2), and Japanese by 1% (3) of the total sample.

The Establishments

a) Numbers of personnel specialists in respondents' establishments

26% (58) were sole personnel specialists within their establishments, while 74% (164) worked with other personnel practitioners on site (N = 222). Table 4.5 below shows the frequencies for the numbers of specialists employed in the respondents' establishments. Due to the large spread of responses, the results are given in the form of ranges. There were no responses in the 26 to 29 range.

Table 4.5
Numbers of personnel specialists in respondents' establishments

<u>No. of specialists</u>	<u>ALL</u>		<u>Multi-specialists in Establishment</u>	
	N	%	N	%
1	58	25	-	-
2	32	14	32	20
3	33	14	33	20
4	25	11	25	15
5	15	7	15	9
6 - 10	28	12	28	17
11 - 15	14	6	14	9
16 - 20	7	3	7	4
21 - 25	4	2	4	2
30 - 80	6	3	6	4
Non-response	7	3	-	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>100</u>

b) Status of respondents' establishments

Table 4.6 below shows the frequencies for the status of the respondents' workplaces.

Table 4.6

Status of establishments (workplaces)

<u>Workplace status</u>	<u>ALL</u>		<u>Responses</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Headquarters	55	24	55	29
Division	38	17	38	20
Regional office	24	10	24	13
Branch office	2	1	2	1
Plant	56	24	56	30
Other	13	6	13	7
Non-response	<u>41</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>100</u>

Thus, the respondents worked in a diverse range of establishments.

Further details of respondents' establishments, and the numbers of employees for whom they provide personnel services will be presented in Chapter Five, which concerns their job content.

Sex, Age, Personnel Service, and Job Levels

The sample was made up of 80% (184) males, and 20% (45) females, which corresponds with Watson's (1977) sample composition of 81% males and 19% females (N = 100), but is markedly different from Long's (1984) study, which had 440 men and 450 women.

The ages of the respondents in this study ranged from 23 to 64 years. The age distribution showed a negative kurtosis, and while the mean age was 40.7, the median was 39, and the mode was 35 years. Table 4.7 below shows the ages of the respondents, by

sex, in a condensed format:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>KEY</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>M : F</u> <u>RATIO</u>	<u>ROW TOTAL</u>
23 - 29	F	24	16		40
	C	13%	36%	6 : 4	
30 - 39	F	69	14		83
	C	37%	31%	8 : 2	
40 - 49	F	44	7		51
	C	24%	15%	9 : 1	
50 - 59	F	40	8		48
	C	22%	18%	8 : 2	
60 - 64	F	7	0		7
	C	4%	0	10 : 0	
Column totals	F	184	45		229
	C	80%	20%		100%

KEY: F = frequency; C = column percent.

There was a strong relationship between sex and age. There were relatively more men in the older age groups, and 67% of females were under 40 years of age, compared to 50% of males. The age group under 29 years consisted of 60% males and 40% females, which may reflect an increase in women entering the personnel occupation.

Service in personnel work

84% (N = 229) had 5 years' or more service in personnel work. The distribution for personnel service ranged from 6 months to 37 years, with a mean length of service in the occupation of 11.8 years, and a median of 10.3 years. Table 4.8 below shows age by the length of service in personnel, in a condensed format. This table gives the first indication in this report that personnel management was not the first job for the majority

of the sample, a matter which is relevant to later sections of this chapter concerning entry to the personnel occupation, and previous employment.

Table 4.8 Age by length of service in personnel

<u>AGE</u>		<u>SERVICE IN YEARS</u>							<u>Row Totals</u>
<u>Key</u>	<u>Under one</u>	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-9</u>	<u>10-14</u>	<u>15-19</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25+</u>		
23-29	F	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	40
	C	0	57	30	0	0	0	0	18%
30-39	F	1	6	29	30	17	0	0	83
	C	50	17	44	53	45	0	0	36%
40-49	F	1	7	8	16	10	8	1	51
	C	50	20	12	28	26	40	9	22%
50-59	F	0	2	9	10	11	10	6	48
	C	0	6	14	17	29	50	55	21%
60-64	F	0	0	0	1	0	2	4	7
	C	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>3%</u>
Column	F	2	35	66	57	38	20	11	229
Totals	C	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>100%</u>

Key: F = frequency; C = column percent

Pearson's r (full table) = + 0.57 ($p < .0001$)

The main trend in Table 4.8 is the obvious one, that age and length of service in personnel are strongly and positively correlated. It was found, however, that 31% (16) of the age band 40 - 49 (51) had less than 10 years' service in personnel. When this age band was compared to the combined others at the 10 years' service break, chi-square = 4.606 ($p = < .05$) resulted. From observation alone however, we can see from Table 4.8 that the majority of the respondents entered personnel at some stage into their working lives.

Job levels

The job levels which will be discussed were compiled from an analysis of the job titles of the respondents, together with their descriptions of their responsibilities. The difficulties of using job titles alone were noted by Watson (1977). While some idea of function can be drawn from job titles, they do not always reflect the job (Thomason, 1967). Moreover, titles can vary a lot (Lawrence, 1986). Indeed, this was the case with the survey reported here, as 77 job titles were found, 15% (12) of which gave no indication of the level of work performed by the job-holder.

While titles containing 'Adviser', 'Controller' and 'Administrator', would obviously have some meaning for the post-holders, and others in their own organizations, they were deficient for analytical purposes. The respondents' descriptions of their responsibilities, however, helped to produce a more accurate picture of each job in terms of level, and the relevant titles were re-coded as appropriate.

A list of all the job titles reported appears in Appendix 2, Table E. Some indication of level was found in titles which contained 'Director' (8), 'Manager' (33) and 'Officer' (24), but an examination of the responsibilities of all of these titles showed that not all of the managers had subordinates, and that some of the officers had specialist personnel staff reporting to them.

The existence of these two groups raised the question of

the validity of the titles 'manager' and 'officer'. Closer examination of both the duties and responsibilities of each group however, showed that the titles reflected the types and levels of work performed, and they were thus retained for analytical purposes. The criteria used to allocate level were therefore somewhat less arbitrary than those which Watson (1977) said he used in determining job levels, although it must be said that, short of a detailed job analysis on every job in a survey sample, the allocation of jobs to levels must depend to some extent on the judgement and experience of the analyst.

Table 4.9 shows the job levels of the respondents, according to their sectors of employment.

Table 4.9 Job levels by employment sector

<u>Level</u>	<u>Private</u>		<u>Public</u>		<u>Row Totals</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Director	4	2	4	9	8	4
Manager with subords.	103	57	14	30	117	51
Manager, no subords.	12	7	0	0	12	5
Officer with subords.	32	17	19	40	51	22
Officer, no subords.	<u>31</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>18</u>
Column totals	<u>182</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

It was necessary, in some of the crosstabulations, to condense the 'manager' and 'officer' classifications, giving 4% (8) Directors, 56% (129) Managers, and 40% (92) Officers. The table generated for job level by age ranges, for example, was extremely large. It was observed, however, that there seemed to be a 'natural' split in the data at the age of 40. Table 4.10 below shows the results after recoding. The chi-square and significance data in relation to Table 4.10 are reported in

Table 4.11 which follows.

Table 4.10

Job level by age-group

<u>Level</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Age</u>		<u>Row Totals</u>
		<u>Under 40</u>	<u>40 and over</u>	
Directors	F	1	7	8
	C	1%	7%	4%
Managers	F	64	65	129
	C	52%	61%	56%
Officers	F	58	34	92
	C	47%	32%	40%
Column totals		123	106	229
		54%	46%	100%

Key: F = frequency; C = column percent

Table 4.11

Significant differences in job level by age-group

<u>Comparison groups</u>	<u>Chi-Sq</u>	<u>p</u>
Directors v. Mgrs + Officers	5.663	.05
Directors v. Managers	4.161	.05
Directors v. Officers	7.773	.01
Managers v. Dirs + Officers	1.996	Not signif.
Managers v. Officers	3.917	.05
Officers v. Directors + Mgrs	5.386	.05

Thus, in terms of careers in personnel management, directors are the most likely to be over 40 years of age, while officers will for the most part, be younger than 40. While age was not a determinant of entry to the managerial level, managers were more likely than officers to be over 40.

These findings gave rise to the question of whether job levels were related to length of service in the occupation. As the crosstabulation generated in this regard held 67.5% cells with

E.F. <5, the data was recoded to produce the results reported in Table 4.12 below. See Appendix 2, Table F, for the frequencies from which the Table 4.12 figures were extracted.

Table 4.12

Job level by service in personnel

<u>Level</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Service in years</u>			<u>Row Totals</u>
		<u>Under 5</u>	<u>5 - 14</u>	<u>15 and over</u>	
Directors	F	0	2	6	8
	C	0	2%	9%	
Managers	F	14	68	47	129
	C	39%	55%	67%	
Officers	F	22	53	17	92
	C	<u>61%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>24%</u>	
Column Totals	F	36	123	70	<u>229</u>
	C	<u>16%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>30%</u>	

Key: F = frequency; C = column percent

In the group with under five years' service in personnel, compared with the rest, two significant relationships were found:

Managers v. Directors and Officers (chi-sq. 5.283, p = .05), and Officers v. Directors and Managers (chi-sq. 7.790, p = .01).

When compared with the rest, all of the comparisons between job levels in the 5 - 14 year service band yielded no significant relationships. In the band for 15 years' service and over, all of the comparisons undertaken yielded significant results, which are shown below in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13

Significant differences in job level by service in personnel
Service 15 years and over

<u>Comparison groups</u>	<u>Chi Sq.</u>	<u>p</u>
Directors v. Mgrs and Officers	7.711	.01
Directors v. Managers	4.723	.05
Directors v. Officers	13.277	.001
Managers v. Dirs and Officers	4.790	.05
Managers v. Officers	8.416	.01
Officers v. Mgrs and Directors	10.590	.01

Directors are therefore more likely than the other two levels to have 15 years' or more service in personnel, while Officers comprise the group which is both the most likely to have less than 5 years' service, and the least likely to have 15 years' service or more.

The Managers were less likely than the Directors to have served 15 years or more in personnel. The Managers were also less likely than the Officers to have been in the occupation for under 5 years. 64% (82) of the Managers (129) had served less than 15 years, but they comprised 39% (14) of the respondents in the 'under 5 years' service band (36). It is obviously not necessary to serve for long in personnel before gaining the title of a manager: some came straight in at managerial level.

Observation of the lower service band frequencies for Directors and Managers suggests that factors other than experience in the specialism, denoted by length of service, are involved in the achievement of managerial and higher posts. Further reference will be made to Tables 4.8 and 4.12, when entry to the personnel function is examined in the section following the

next.

We shall now consider the composition of the sample according to the sex of the respondents in the various levels of job, shown below in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

<u>Level</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Sex</u>		<u>M : F</u> <u>Ratio</u>	<u>Row</u> <u>Totals</u>
		<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>		
Directors	F	8	0	10 : 1	8
	C	4%	0%		
Managers with subordinates	F	101	16	9 : 1	117
	C	55%	36%		
Managers, no subordinates	F	10	2	8 : 2	12
	C	5%	4%		
Officers with subordinates	F	42	9	8 : 2	51
	C	23%	20%		
Officers, no subordinates	F	23	18	6 : 4	41
	C	13%	40%		
Column totals	F	184	45		229
	C	80%	20%		100%

Key: F = frequency; C = column percent

** Chi-square 20.07228, $p = <.01$, D.F. = 4.

Table 4.14 supports Long's (1984) findings that women do not tend to attain top posts in personnel management. There were no female personnel directors. Watson's sample (100) included one female director, 5% of his women interviewees (19). 32% (6) were managers, and 63% (12) were officers. Apart from the director post, the results of this survey correspond quite closely with Watson's findings.

Comparisons with Long's (1984) report are less easy, due to the

number of job levels she depicted, which included 'Junior' and 'Senior' classifications, as well as 'Other' and 'No longer in personnel/related work'. It seemed sensible to amalgamate Long's three female 'officer' categories into one group of 'officers', and to create a composite 'manager' group from her 'manager' and 'executive' classifications. These procedures enabled a comparison with Long's results, which is shown below in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15
Comparison of female managers and officers - this study
with Long (1984)

<u>Job title</u>	<u>Long</u>		<u>This study</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Director	12	3	-	-
Manager	123	29	18	40
Officer	231	54	27	60
Other respondents	<u>60</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>426</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100</u>

As Long's sample of females was ten times larger than that of this study, it might be possible to say that it was more representative of the total population of female personnel specialists. On the other hand, the sample was drawn exclusively from IPM members, which may make it different in some way in its composition from this sample which included non-members.

On the basis of evidence which will be presented later regarding IPM membership, it is suggested here that, as managers in personnel who were asked by their superiors to join the function were the group least likely to join the IPM, the numbers in the management levels Long reported may be an understatement of the true numbers involved.

In this study, 60% (27) of the women (45) held officer-level posts, compared to 35% (65) of the men (184). Women accounted for 29% (27) of all officer posts (92), and for only 14% (18) of the manager level (129). Obviously, equality still has some way to go in personnel.

Entry to the personnel specialism

Tables 4.8 and 4.12 above have shown that for most of the respondents, personnel was not their first occupation. It was seen that 11% (14) of the managers (129) had less than five years' service in the specialism. These points raise the question of how the respondents came to be in personnel work.

Before we consider this, however, we will first examine the data presented in Tables 4.16 and 4.17 below, which concern the ages of the respondents and the proportions of their working lives spent doing personnel work, as these help to contextualise the question of mode of entry.

Table 4.16
Respondents' ages by the proportion of working life spent in
personnel work

<u>Age</u> <u>Range</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Under</u> <u>25%</u>	<u>25-49%</u>	<u>50-74%</u>	<u>75-99%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>Row</u> <u>Totals</u>
23-29	F	2	2	9	4	23	40
	C	12%	5%	14%	12%	35%	18%
30-39	F	5	11	19	17	31	83
	C	29%	26%	29%	50%	47%	37%
40-49	F	6	12	14	9	7	48
	C	35%	29%	22%	26%	11%	21%
50-59	F	4	16	19	3	4	46
	C	24%	38%	29%	9%	6%	21%
60-64	F	0	1	4	1	1	7
	C	0%	2%	6%	3%	1%	3%
Column Totals	F	17	42	65	34	66	224
	C	8%	19%	29%	15%	29%	100%

Key: F = frequency; C = Column percent

While we would note that 100% of the working life of a person aged 25 is substantially different from that of one aged 60 in terms of the period of time concerned, Table 4.16 shows that in the sample overall (excluding 5 non-responses), under 30% (66) had spent the whole of their working lives in personnel. 40% (38) of the respondents who were aged between 40 and 59 had worked in personnel for less than half of their working lives.

Overall, however, 74% (165) had spent half or more of their working lives in personnel. In terms of the 'modes of entry' section of this chapter which follows, the group which is most pertinent to the discussion contained there comprises the respondents whose whole careers (regardless of their length), had been spent in personnel management. Thus, comparisons

were made between the various age bands within this group, which (following Watson's (1977) terminology) has been called 'initial choosers'. Table 4.17 below shows the results of the relevant chi-square and significance calculations, by age band.

Table 4.17

Comparison of initial choosers by age band
Chi-square and significance results

<u>Comparison groups</u>	<u>Chi-Squ.</u>	<u>p</u>
22-29 v. combined others	18.416	.001
30-39 v. " "	3.945	.05
40-49 v. " "	6.509	.05
50-59 v. " "	12.013	.001
60-64 v. " "	0.080	not significant

In the larger age group 'under 40' (123), 44% (54) were 'initial choosers', while only 12% (12) of the '40 and over' group (101) were in this category (chi-square 27.362, $p = .001$).

Thus, the proportions of the respondents in the two age groups under 40 who went into personnel as their first job were greater than the proportions in the older age groups. The youngest group was the most likely to have done so, while the 40-49 group, and especially the 50-59 group, predominantly arrived in personnel by means other than initial choice. The results of Tables 4.16 and 4.17 will be discussed further shortly, when we examine exactly which 'other means' resulted in entry to the occupation.

While the proportion of working life spent in personnel work is useful background information for considering how the respondents entered the occupation, one more set of data is required in order to do so. This concerns the ages of the respondents and the ages at which they entered the specialism.

The frequency table for this crosstabulation is presented in full in Appendix 2, Table G.

The data from Appendix 2 table G which immediately concern us here are shown in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18

Summary - age at entry to personnel

<u>Age at entry</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 20	18	8
20 - 29	123	54
30 - 39	56	25
40 - 49	27	12
50 and over	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>227</u>	<u>100</u>

62% (141), therefore, entered while under the age of thirty.

The group who had entered personnel aged '30 and over' were examined according to their current ages, to produce the summary shown in Table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19

Summary by current age-band of personnel entry at 30 years or over

<u>Current Age-band</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>% of age-band</u>	<u>N</u>
30 - 39	12	14	83
40 - 49	34	67	51
50 - 59	35	75	47
60 and over	5	83	6

Thus, there appeared to be a natural division in the data, both at the entry age of 30 and at the age band 30 to 39. Chi-square calculations were therefore generated, which produced the data detailed below in Table 4.20. As the age group 23-29 obviously had no option to enter the occupation at age 30 or over, they were excluded from this exercise.

Table 4.20Comparison by current age-band of entry at 30 years or over

<u>Current age-band</u>	<u>Compared with</u>	<u>Chi-square</u>	<u>p</u>
30 - 39	Combined others	59.736	.001
40 - 49	Combined others	12.071	.001
50 - 59	Combined others	20.490	.001
60 - 64	Combined others	3.408	-

Once again, therefore, we have found very significant differences between the patterns of entry of the two youngest age groups compared with the group aged over forty. The disparity between those two cohorts, together with that shown within the 40-59 group, possibly reflects the growth of the personnel specialism over the past 25 years or so in that, at the start of that period recruits were predominantly experienced in other occupations, while over the past 10 to 15 years the specialism has been established enough to attract the majority of entrants as a first choice of career. On the other hand, the findings may possibly mean that senior personnel jobs go to people who were not initial choosers.

Modes of entry

In the earlier description of Table 4.17, the term initial chooser was ascribed to Watson (1977: 72), who reported four modes of entry into the personnel occupation, preceded by a literature review on occupational choice (pp64-69). The four modes of entry were as follows:

I Initial choosers, where work in personnel "was more or less the initial career";

II Employee-initiated career change (positive), where the employee sought a change during his/her career "with career advancement a major motive";

III Employee-initiated career change (negative), which involved a change during the career resulting from the employee's "rejection of or incapacity in previous work";

IV Organization-initiated career change, where the employee's move into personnel was initiated by the employing organization (Watson, 1977: 72).

Each of the modes depicted by Watson also had sub-modes allocated by him to specify the conditions which stimulated the mode of entry. This last consideration need not concern us yet, as our interest here is in the total responses reported by Watson for each mode. From a sample of 100, there was 24% initial choice, 29% employee-initiated change (positive), 20% employee-initiated change (negative), and 27% organization-initiated change. A question which arises from Watson's results is whether there are more modes of entry than those he reported.

The question that the respondents were asked about entry may be seen in Appendix 3, p.4, A8. Briefly, it included the four modes of entry identified by Watson, described in layman's terms, together with the category 'Other', and it requested that the method of entry be specified if this response was chosen. The respondents were asked to select the method of entry to personnel which most nearly corresponded with their own experience.

Table 4.21 has been annotated with Watson's (1977: 72) entry categories, and it shows the response frequencies according to the sex of the respondents.

Table 4.21

Mode of occupational entry by respondent's sex

<u>Entry category</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>M : F</u> <u>Ratio</u>	<u>Row</u> <u>Totals</u>
Initial choosers	F	57	13		70
	C	31%	29%	8 : 2	31%
Employee positive	F	42	7		49
	C	23%	16%	9 : 1	21%
Employee negative	F	3	4*		7
	C	2%	9%	4 : 6	3%
Organization- initiated	F	46	11		57
	C	25%	24%	8 : 2	25%
Other	F	36	10		46
	C	<u>19%</u>	<u>22%</u>	8 : 2	<u>20%</u>
Column totals	F	184	45		229
	C	<u>80%</u>	<u>20%</u>		<u>100%</u>

Key: F = frequency; C = Column percent

* chi-square 6.428, p = .05

We can see that just under a third were initial choosers, that the percentage for entry to personnel as a 'way out' was very low, that just under a quarter entered the occupation for advancement, and that a fifth of the sample did not view their experience of personnel entry as conforming to Watson's (1977) classifications. Although the negative employee-initiated mode of entry did not achieve a high response, women were more likely than men to view personnel as a way out of former employment which was unsatisfactory in some way.

The responses to the category 'Other' were examined, and the descriptions grouped according to type. 42 of the 46 'Other' respondents wrote in a description of their mode of entry. Four

distinct groups were found, in which the responses did not fit with the descriptions of Watson's four modes of entry.

The first group (26%: 11) had all experienced a termination of their former employment, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This group will be called 'career-pause' entrants. Five reasons for the cessation of former careers were apparent; the expiry of Forces commissions (3), redundancy (4), maternity (2), entering full-time education as a mature student (1), and the expiry of a fixed-term contract (1). Obviously, in all of these cases, the respondents had to decide what to do next. Two members of this group mentioned occupational guidance and careers counselling as decision-making aids. While the general description of employee-initiated change (positive) would appear to accommodate this first group, they comprise a separate sub-mode to the ones which Watson (1977) outlined, three of which concerned advancement to a higher level of work, and the fourth a 'shift in career setting'.

In this last sub-mode, Watson included two people who had formerly been in 'very personnel-oriented' jobs in the Forces, together with one from the WRAC, and one who previously had a police career. Their designation, 'career shift' indicated that they were performing activities in the civilian setting which were similar to those undertaken in their former careers. This point is of particular relevance to our consideration of the three ex-Forces members of our 'career-pause' group.

The first was a Physical Training Instructor and Administration

Clerk in the WRAC, who at one point was sent on a welfare course, which she enjoyed. She applied for posts in personnel because she thought her ability (as a Sergeant) "to get on with people even if you don't like them" would be useful. The second, the Commanding Officer of a Naval Air Squadron, a time-served electrical engineer, had the opportunity of a job as a Development Engineer on leaving the service, but chose instead to go into personnel. The third was an Infantry Training Instructor in the Army, who entered a general personnel post.

Are we to say, then, that these people engaged in 'career shift' merely because they had been in the Forces? It would seem sensible to exercise a degree of caution here, for there is a danger of subscribing to the notion that all ex-Forces and/or police entrants to personnel had enough experience in personnel-type work to warrant the 'career shift' designation. It seems reasonable to consider that the Forces and police, in common with other employers, will have some jobs which have a greater personnel content than others.

As a case in point, the former RAF sergeant was asked at interview what knowledge she had brought to personnel. Her reply was,

"Not a lot. I had worked with people. I didn't know the law - I was a beginner. It was on-the-job training ...in at the deep end".

Three cases of negative choice were found in the 'career-pause' group (11), all of whom had been made redundant. One former factory manager could not find related work, and joined the Health and Safety section of a large personnel department. A

former management consultant said,

"I had a choice - I could have been an engineer, but this job was advertised on the day I was made redundant, so I applied for it. It was purely an accident why I am here".

The third regretted that there were no openings in his area:

"I would have preferred work study, but there were no jobs available anywhere. I was geographically limited, and took what I could get".

Within the 'career-pause' group therefore, there was both positive and negative choice, which suggests that this group should be split according to the positive/negative characteristics, and allocated to the corresponding employee-initiated mode. A 'career-pause' (negative) sub-mode would accommodate not only those who made a negative choice about personnel entry following redundancy, but also others who saw it as 'a way out' of a career-pause situation.

In a technical sense, the second group of personnel entrants (six) did not 'enter' personnel. They had had non-personnel jobs which 'grew' into personnel ones through the allocation of additional duties, or the re-distribution of work responsibilities following reorganisations or 'special projects'. This group belongs firmly in the 'organization-initiated' mode of entry, but again does not quite fit Watson's (1977: 78-79) description of people moving into personnel work in specialist departments.

In the case of this group, the work 'moved' into their jobs. Two Administration Managers in the private sector were given

increasing amounts of personnel work as part of their administrative duties. A Product Manager, whose private company was bought by another, found himself in charge of personnel after a company reorganisation. An N.H.S. administrator's job accrued personnel duties to such an extent that they became her main role, following her participation in an Organizational Development 'special project'. A Senior Nursing Officer was required to incorporate personnel work with her duties after reorganisation in the N.H.S. Local Government reorganisation meant that a Payroll Coordinator in a Finance Department had his job turned into a personnel/payroll one.

Granted, Watson's outline of change initiated by the organization (p72) included the sub-mode 'development of previous job', but the narrative which followed indicated that this concerned the organization moving people into personnel departments because of certain skills and experience gained in their previous work. Indeed, that typology relates well to the findings of Table 4.16 above, about the respondents aged 40 and over who had entered the specialism some time into their careers.

It does not however, appear to accommodate the group under discussion, whose jobs were augmented by personnel work, the volume of which gradually turned their posts into specialist ones. This group had personnel thrust upon them, and there was no element of choice. For the purposes of future discussion of this group, it will be named 'compulsory job-expansion'.

The third group (16) consisted of people who had made a positive choice to enter personnel for their own self-development, rather than 'advancement' (e.g. higher level work, more money, more opportunities for promotion). The members of this group were those who had aspects of personnel work in their jobs which they enjoyed/were interested in, to the extent that they wished to move into the personnel department in order to perform the duties full-time. As two respondents put it,

"I gradually realised that personnel-type work was my forte",
and,

"I was employed in production management, realised my interest in personnel management, and then developed it".

The key words in the majority of these responses were 'interest' and 'development'. In the questionnaire, the 'employee -initiated' (positive) question included the description "came to think of personnel as a way of advancing my career". As the group under discussion checked 'Other', it appears that they saw their own development as something different from advancement. It seems sensible therefore, to regard the 'self -development' group as an additional sub-mode in the 'employee -initiated' (positive) category.

The fourth and final group (9) comprised respondents who had not chosen personnel work, but had been placed in it by their employers in one of three ways. These were; initial placement of trainees, developmental same-level transfer, and promotion without prior consultation. It seems appropriate to call this group 'compulsory placement' entrants, for they had been told, not

asked, to do personnel jobs.

There were two trainees in this group. One would rather have been in sales, while the other described his arrival in personnel as "a total accident". His employer was a private company which had a 'Civil Service' mobile generalist approach to staff development, entailing general traineeships followed by placement in a specialism. After his traineeship, he "fell into personnel, and didn't have any choice in it". This type of approach accounted for five of the respondents in this group who were not trainees. One interviewee said, "it is unlikely I'll be in personnel for any length of time. It is a placement in a 'Civil Service-style' career". Another was "directed into" a personnel post.

In addition to the seven respondents already mentioned, there were two who were promoted into personnel posts they had not applied for. One of these was an administration assistant in education, while the other was the company secretary of a small private concern. It would appear that the description of 'compulsory placement' is appropriate for this group, unless it is considered that refusal of a placement or promotion is a realistic choice for employees in terms of their job security or future career prospects.

The foregoing descriptions of the various groups found within the category 'Other' suggest that the four modes of entry depicted by Watson (1977) are valid, but incomplete. It is suggested therefore, that the employee-initiated (positive) mode

has two additional sub-modes; 'career-pause' (positive), and 'self-development'. Further, that the employee-initiated (negative) mode has one additional sub-mode, 'career-pause' (negative); and last, that the organization-initiated change mode has an additional two sub-modes, which ideally would replace the description of 'general' denoted by Watson (on which he did not expand). These are 'compulsory job-expansion' and 'compulsory placement'.

Additional data concerning modes of entry

An analysis of age by mode of entry was conducted, which is presented in full in Appendix 2, Table H.

It was shown earlier, in Table 4.21, that 31% (71) of the sample (229) were initial choosers. The data in Appendix 2, Table H showed that 87% (62) of the initial choosers (71) were aged under 40.

Initial choice accounted for 60% (24) of ages 23-29 (40), and 46% (38) of ages 30-39 (83), while it only accounted for 10% (5) of ages 40-49 (51), and 8% (4) of those aged 50-59 (48). An analysis of age by mode of entry was therefore performed, using the age categories 'under 40' and '40 and over', and the results are reported Table 4.22 below.

For the purposes of this, and subsequent tables regarding mode of entry, employee-initiated (positive) has been termed as 'advancement', employee-initiated (negative) as 'a way out', and organization-initiated as 'employer asked'.

Table 4.22Condensed age categories by mode of entry

<u>Age</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Initial Career</u>	<u>Advance- ment</u>	<u>A way out</u>	<u>Employer asked</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Row Totals</u>
Under 40	F	62	17	3	18	23	123
	C	87%	35%	43%	32%	50%	54%
40 and over	F	9	32	4	38	23	106
	C	<u>13%</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>68%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>46%</u>
Column Totals	F	71	49	7	56	46	229
	C	<u>31%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Chi-square		46.762	9.068	0.342	13.871	0.319	
p		.001	.01	-	.001	-	

Key: F = frequency; C = column percent

The chi-square and significance figures below the table show, for each mode of entry, the results of the comparison between the two age categories.

Age 40 and over are more likely to have (1) moved into personnel for advancement, and (2) been asked to join by their employers. Age 40 and under are more likely to be on their initial career. Thus, we have a clearer picture of where the disparities between the age groups, first seen in an earlier part of this section, lie in occupational entry.

While 69% (158) of the sample (229) had other work experience before joining personnel, this is not presented here as a striking disclosure. Indeed, we have already seen that 76% (76) of Watson's (1977) sample (100) were not initial choosers. Further, 66% (561) of Long's (1984) sample (850) had been in jobs other than personnel prior to entering the occupation. Comparisons with these other studies therefore suggest that the

respondents in this study were not unusual in respect of occupational entry.

Two further aspects of entry to the occupation will be discussed before we consider the jobs which the respondents held immediately prior to their current posts. These concern, first, the level of current jobs together with the respondents' modes of entry to them, and next, the data about the influences on occupational choice experienced by the study's interviewees.

Table 4.23 below reports the job levels of respondents by their modes of entry to personnel.

Table 4.23

Job level by mode of entry

<u>Job level</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Initial Career</u>	<u>Advance- ment</u>	<u>A way out</u>	<u>Employer asked</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Row Total</u>
Director	F	1	1	0	2	4	8
	C	1%	2%	0%	4%	9%	
Manager	F	34	29	2	40	24	129
	C	48%	59%	29%	71%	25%	
Officer	F	36	19	5	14	18	92
	C	<u>51%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>39%</u>	
Column Totals	F	71	49	7	56	46	229
	C	<u>31%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>20%</u>	

Key: F = frequency; C = Column percent

The officers were the group most likely to have chosen personnel as their initial career (chi-square 4.747, $p = .05$). They were also the group least likely to have been asked by their employers to join the specialism (chi-square 7.1019, $p = .01$). The managers were the most likely to have been asked to join (chi-square 6.868, $p = .01$). The directors were the group most

likely to have arrived in personnel as a result of 'Other' stimuli (chi-square 4.621, $p = .05$).

Influences on choice

In his literature review on occupational choice, Watson (1977) queried whether there was "in fact, *choice* or anything like it". He suggested that the literature had equivocated on the matter, as it had "either emphasised the existence of choices or sought to indicate the lack of opportunity for what can realistically be called 'choice'". Regarding job entry, Bennett (1974) wrote that an individual's orientation "should mean some reflection or representation of the total motivational state...at a particular point in time [which portrayed] the effects of needs, values, attitudes, abilities and other behavioural aspects". Thus, the individual was linked with his/her situation at the time of deciding whether or not to enter a particular job.

The results reported here about influences on the choice of personnel as an occupation were derived from interviews. While a description of the methodology is presented in Appendix I, it may be useful to provide a brief outline of the way in which the interview data are reported, both in this section and subsequently. Interviews were conducted with 68 respondents to the questionnaire, and 41 non-respondents (109). The respondent and non-respondent frequencies were checked for significant differences in response between the two groups. Only six were found, and the tables in which these arise are annotated accordingly. The interview data are reported as composite

figures of respondents and non-respondents.

It seems prudent to comment here on the nature of the interview data. They were derived from the interviewees' perceptions of their work, their experiences, and their behaviour. These were taken at face-value, and we do not know how objective and/or truthful they were. The report does, however, raise questions about these matters from time to time, where it seems appropriate.

The interviewees were asked what was the main influencing factor on their choice of personnel work. Table 4.24 shows the frequency table of responses.

Table 4.24

Influences on the choice of personnel work - frequencies

<u>Influencing factor</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Wanted to work with people	19	17 *
Not really a choice (Note 1 below)	19	17
Development move	15	14
Promotion opportunity	14	13
Logical step after college	12	11
Wanted to use personal skills	11	10
It looked varied/interesting	7	6
No prospects in previous job	5	5
Other/ by accident	4	4
Thought it would be enjoyable	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>109</u>	<u>100%</u>

* Significant difference between respondents and non-respondents resulting in chi-square 6.398, $p = .05$:
 10% respondents (7 out of 68);
 29% non-respondents (12 out of 41).

Note 1 to Table 4.24

These interviewees felt that, as they had been persuaded to, or been told to, do personnel work by their superiors, they had little choice but to accept if they wanted further progress in their careers.

While Table 4.24 depicts a wide range of responses, and gives some idea of the needs, attitudes and abilities of the interviewees in relation to their choice of personnel work, it is an inadequate indicator of their total motivational states at the time their decisions to enter personnel were made. 17% (19) of the interviewees, however, said that 'choice' was not the appropriate word to describe their entry to personnel:

" I was hired as a general trainee, and placed in personnel"
(Personnel Mgr., Construction);

"The company had offered me a graduate traineeship in Sales, but on arriving, there were no sales opportunities. It was Personnel, or Finance, or nothing"
(Personnel Mgr., Food, Drink & Tobacco);

"My first personnel involvement was not a choice. I fell into it via another role"
(Personnel and Training Mgr., Machine Tools);

"I was a project coordinator in a new business which wasn't working out. They had a considerable number of problems in personnel administration. My requirement for a job coincided with their requirement for someone to do it. I would have been redundant if I hadn't taken the job"
(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"I entered personnel five years ago, quite by accident. My name was on the promotion list, which went to the Promotion Board. If they offered a suitable post, and you refused it, you lost the promotion. At that time all the managers were generalists. I got a promoted post in personnel. It is now my choice to stay in personnel"
(Personnel Mgr., Telecommunications).

While most managers did not believe that they had followed a 'career path', "most in practice had changed jobs in a predictable and sequential sort of way" Twigger (1978). Careers may have been rationalised in retrospect by their participants (Nicholson and West, 1988). One interviewee who felt that he had not chosen personnel as an occupation experienced:

"...an interesting drift into personnel: craft apprentice, Forces, technical instructor, training officer, wage and salary administrator, deputy personnel manager. I fancied personnel"

(Personnel Mgr., Electrical Components Manufacture).

Another built upon the experience gained in his former occupation:

"I was very involved in training in the Navy. It was a skill I had that I could offer to industry. Training was a way into mainstream personnel"

(Personnel Mgr., Engineering).

This manager said that he had come into personnel to advance his career. From his remark, he can be identified as a Forces 'career shift' entrant (cf. Watson, 1977).

Previous experience in other aspects of business could also be an advantage in being selected for a personnel post:

"I always had a picture of personnel which interested me. Non-routine. That attracted me. I applied for this post because they wanted a recruitment person who knew the operational side"

(Personnel Officer, Gas).

Lack of the requisite qualifications for the interviewee's previous job could, however, also lead to a change of occupation:

"My previous job was moving towards qualified surveyors, architects, and engineers. I didn't have those qualifications. The job involved recruitment and manpower planning, and I liked that, so I looked for an opening in personnel. I applied for a year's unpaid leave to take the IPM course, and the company granted it"

(Personnel Mgr., Telecommunications).

For some, possession of the requisite skills, or at least the skills they perceived as relevant, determined their choice :

"My skills are verbal, rather than numeric, so personnel appealed. It's requirements are in line with my strengths"
(Personnel Officer, Vehicle Manufacture);

"Preferring people to figures, I chose personnel as the job with an active 'people' involvement. It's really as simple as that"
(Personnel Manager, Food Drink & Tobacco).

Crichton (1963) wrote that many personnel managers had greater verbal than numerical aptitude, although, as we shall see from Chapter Five's summary of personnel activities, lack of numeracy may be a disadvantage to personnel specialists engaged in control and planning activities.

A variety of other stimuli could result in entry to personnel:

"At college, I was guided by my Industrial Relations lecturers. In the early seventies, I.R. was very topical, and I wanted to be involved"
(Personnel Mgr., Medical Supplies);

"My degree linked me to a non-technical occupation. I had a starry-eyed view of personnel being a 'people business'. It was a firm choice, based on the wrong premises - but I enjoy it, and don't regret my choice"
(Personnel Mgr., Steel Production);

"There were negative and positive influences. I thought I'd be good at it, and other people said I had the aptitude and skills to be good at it. That's the positive side. On the negative side, I was becoming a technical specialist in Management Services, and I didn't enjoy it, and didn't know where it would lead. I went into personnel at local government reorganization. Lots of jobs were up for grabs - so I grabbed one in Personnel!"
(Personnel Director, Public Sector).

The foregoing interview extracts give some indication that the coding of the responses in Table 4.24 cannot do full justice to what were, in the majority, lengthy narratives concerning what was for many, one of the most important decisions of their working lives.

Previous employment

Those respondents who indicated on the questionnaire that personnel was not their initial career were asked to give the job title of the post that they held immediately before entering the specialism. Their employment background was diverse. The 145 responses to this question produced a total of 120 job titles, which are presented in full in Appendix 2, Table I. It will be noted that 6 responses included 'training', three were concerned with placement, and one denoted 'Industrial Relations Analyst'. All of these are nominally 'personnel' activities, yet the respondents involved obviously did not think that they were working 'in personnel'.

The titles were grouped in what seemed a sensible way, to ascertain what kinds of work the respondents (145) did before entering personnel. A 'Miscellaneous' category was necessary to accommodate 20 single responses which defied further classification. Table 4.25 below shows the functional groups in which the respondents were employed immediately before entering personnel.

Table 4.25

Pre-personnel employment by function - frequencies

<u>Function group</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Rounded %</u>
Miscellaneous	20	14
Clerical/Secretarial/PAs	16	11
Production/Factory/Works	16	11
Administration	15	10
Ind. Eng/Wrk. Study/O&M	15	10
Finance/Accounting	9	6
Retailing/Sales/Distrib.	8	6
HM Forces	6	4
Training	6	4
Engineers (excl. Ind.Eng)	6	4
Science/Technology	6	4
Education	5	3
Apprentices/Trainees	5	3
Govt./other employment agents	3	2
Health Care	3	2
Computing	2	1
Marketing	2	1
Estates Mgt. (local govt)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>145</u>	<u>97</u>

29% (13) of the female respondents (45) were initial choosers.

Table I of Appendix 2 is annotated with 'F' where the job-holder was female. The pre-personnel experience of the women (30) was 37% (11) in clerical/secretarial/administration, 10% (3) teachers, 10% (3) medical, and 6.7% (2) retailing/sales. The balance is made up of single responses from a wide variety of occupations, including scientific research and work study.

The main prior work experience for women in Long's (1984) study was in secretarial, clerical and administration work. For men, it was in production, engineering, technology or administration. As only 34% (39) of the men who recorded their previous job titles (115) for this study were in those occupations, there is an obvious disparity with Long's findings. Her sample, however, included IPM members only, and the observed differences may

perhaps mean that personnel specialists who were formerly in Long's predominant pre-personnel occupational groups are more likely to seek membership of the Institute than those who were previously employed in other occupations.

Before appointment to their current jobs, 57% (128) were employed in their present organizations. The length of service in the post held immediately prior to the current job ranged from a minimum of 6 months, to a maximum of 13 years, with a mean of 3.9 years. The total length of service with the same organization ranged from a minimum of 22 months to a maximum of 48.5 years, with a mean of 14.4 years.

43% (98) of the respondents (226) were employed by a different organization immediately prior to their current appointment, and the length of service in the last post with the former organization ranged from a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 20 years, with a mean of 4.1 years. This group (91) were asked if the main activity of the former employer was different from that of the current one. 55% (50) said that the activity was different. Thus, in moving to the present job, 22% of the sample experienced a change in the type of activity conducted by their employer.

Qualifications

In view of the diversity of the respondents' employment backgrounds, it is perhaps not surprising that they had a wide range of qualifications. The frequencies for these are shown in Appendix 2, Table J. The discussion of the data which follows

will focus on parts of that table; degrees, an IPM qualification, and professional qualifications other than the IPM.

First degrees

An analysis of the possession of a first degree, by age, was conducted, and the results are reported in Table 4.26 below.

Table 4.26

Ages of respondents holding a first degree

<u>Age group</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>Degree</u>		<u>Row Totals</u>	<u>Chi-squ</u>	<u>p</u>
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			
23-29	F	28	12	40	12.261	.001
	R	70%	30%	18%		
	C	27%	9%			
30-39	F	44	39	83	3.395	-
	R	53%	47%	36%		
	C	43%	31%			
40-49	F	22	29	51	0.090	-
	R	43%	57%	22%		
	C	21%	23%			
50-59	F	8	40	48	19.670	.001
	R	17%	83%	21%		
	C	8%	32%			
60-64	F	1	6	7	2.749	-
	R	14%	86%	3%		
	C	1%	5%			
Column Totals	F	103	126	229		
	C	45%	55%	100%		

Key: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent

There are very strong associations denoted in Table 4.26, concerning the 23-29 age group and the possession of a degree, and the 50-59 group with not having a degree. It can also be seen that, of the people with degrees (103), 70% (72) were under the age of 40. The age group 40 and over comprised 60% (75) of all respondents without degrees (126). The difference betwe

between these two age groupings was strongly significant (chi-square 19.739, $p = .001$).

The analysis of graduates (103) by job level is shown below in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27

First degrees by job level

<u>Job level</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>(N=103)</u>		<u>(N=126)</u>		
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
Directors	3	3	5	4	8
Managers	55	53	74	59	129
Officers	<u>45</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>92</u>
Totals	<u>103</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>229</u>

There were no significant differences by level.

Higher degrees

Higher degrees were reported by 8% (18) of the sample. None of the directors had a higher degree. 8% (10) of the managers (129) had one, as did 9% (8) of the officers (92). There were no significant differences by level in the possession of a higher degree.

Table 4.28 below shows the analysis of higher degrees by age-band.

Table 4.28

Higher degrees by age-band

<u>Age-band</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>(N=18)</u>		<u>(N=211)</u>		
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
23 - 29	3	17	37	17	40
30 - 39	7	39	76	36	83
40 - 49	5	28	46	22	51
50 and over	<u>3</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>55</u>
Totals	<u>18</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>229</u>

There were no significant differences by age in the possession

of a higher degree.

Professional qualifications other than the IPM

24% (55) of the sample (229) had a professional qualification which was not the IPM one: 38% (3) of Directors (8); 26% (34) of Managers; and 20% (18) of Officers (92). There were no significant differences by level.

Table 4.29 below shows the possession of a professional qualification other than the IPM, by age-band.

Table 4.29

Possession of a professional qualification other than the IPM by age-band

<u>Age-band</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>% sample</u> <u>(229)</u>	<u>% age-band</u>	<u>N</u>
23 - 29	7	3	13	40
30 - 39	14	6	26	83
40 - 49	17	7	31	51
50 - 59	13	6	24	48
60 - 64	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	7	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>55</u>	<u>24</u>		<u>229</u>

While 87% (48) were over 30, a comparison with the under-30s did not produce a significant result (chi-square 3.083).

IPM qualification

35% (81) of the sample (229) had an IPM qualification. Table 4.30 shows the possession of an IPM qualification, by age-band.

Table 4.30

Possession of an IPM qualification by age-band

<u>Age-band</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>% sample</u> <u>(229)</u>	<u>% age-band</u>	<u>N</u>
23 - 29	16	7	40	40
30 - 39	33	14	40	83
40 - 49	18	8	35	51
50 - 59	13	6	27	48
60 - 64	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	14	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>81</u>	<u>35</u>		<u>229</u>

There appears to be a clear decay of possession of the IPM qualification over the age of 40.

The respondents were, however, asked to denote the means by which they obtained the IPM qualification, and these responses were analysed by age group, to provide Table 4.31 below. As N = 88 for this table, it would appear that seven respondents felt that they had not 'qualified' for their IPM membership by examination. It seems reasonable to suppose that the 'experience provisions' entry to membership would account for this group.

Table 4.31

Age of respondents and the means of obtaining the IPM

<u>Age range</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>1 year</u> <u>f/t</u>	<u>Corres-</u> <u>pondence</u>	<u>Exper-</u> <u>ience</u>	<u>Night</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Row</u> <u>Totals</u>
23-29	F	13	0	0	0	3	16
	R	81%	0%	0%	0%	19%	18%
	C	54%	0%	0%	0%	18%	
30-39	F	11	2	2	13	7	35
	R	31%	6%	6%	37%	20%	40%
	C	46%	40%	8%	72%	41%	
40-49	F	0	1	10	5	4	20
	R	0%	5%	50%	25%	20%	23%
	C	0%	20%	42%	28%	23%	
50-59	F	0	2	10	0	3	15
	R	0%	13%	67%	0%	20%	17%
	C	0%	40%	42%	0%	18%	
60-64	F	0	0	2	0	0	2
	R	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	2%
	C	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	
Column	F	24	5	24	18	17	88
Totals	C	<u>27%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Key: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent

Two strong associations were found in Table 4.31: obtaining

the IPM qualification by a year's full-time course in the age group under 40 (chi-square 22.846, $p = .001$); and the prevalence of obtaining IPM membership under the 'experience provisions' in the '40 and over' age group (chi-square 35.170, $p \leq .001$). While just under one-third (11) of the 30-39 group (35) had taken a full-time course, 81% (13) of the 23-29 group (16) had done so. There would therefore seem to be an increasing trend for younger entrants to have an IPM qualification on entry to the occupation. The 'under 40s' comprised 69% (27) of the initial choosers who had an IPM qualification (39).

While 50% (4) of the Directors (8), 33% (43) of the Managers (129) and 37% (34) of the Officers (92) said they had an IPM qualification, no significant differences were found, by level.

The analysis of mode of entry by IPM members, however, shown below in Table 4.32, produced two significant differences, in 'initial career' and 'employer asked'.

Table 4.32 - Mode of entry and possession of IPM qualification

<u>Mode of entry</u>	<u>Key</u>	<u>IPM</u>	<u>No IPM</u>	<u>Row Tot.</u>	<u>Chi-Squ</u>	<u>p</u>
Initial career	F	39	32	71	17.219	.001
	R	55%	45%	31%		
	C	48%	22%			
A 'way out'	F	2	5	7	0.146	-
	R	29%	71%	3%		
	C	2%	3%			
Advancement	F	15	34	49	0.617	-
	R	31%	69%	21%		
	C	19%	23%			
Employer asked	F	12	44	56	6.298	.05
	R	21%	79%	25%		
	C	15%	30%			
Other	F	13	33	46	1.271	-
	R	28%	72%	20%		
	C	16%	22%			
Column Totals	F	81	148	229		
	C	35%	65%	100%		

KEY: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent

Specialists who make personnel their initial career choice are the group most likely to obtain the IPM qualification, while respondents who were asked by their employers to join the function are not as inclined as other groups to seek qualified status. The contents of Table 4.32 have implications for the training of personnel specialists, which will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

Daniel and Millward (1983) reported that, due to the low incidence of formal qualifications in their survey, there was "very little sign indeed of relevant formal qualifications becoming a condition of entry into the [personnel] occupation". Only 10% of their respondents with a personnel/IR job title had

a degree or diploma which was in social science or was business-related, while 6% had a degree or diploma in personnel management/IR.

In the study reported here, 45% (103) of the sample (229) had a degree, and 42% (44) of those degrees were in the subjects specified by Daniel and Millward. Thus, 19% (44) of the sample (229) had a relevant degree. In addition, one-third (6) of the higher degrees (18) were MBAs, and 35% (81) of the respondents (229) were IPM-qualified. When these points were coupled with the information that 86% (6) of the HND qualifications (7) were in Business Studies, and that the DMS accounted for 11% (6) of professional qualifications other than the IPM, it was apparent that the respondents in this study were better qualified in terms of job specificity than Daniel and Millward's specialist group.

It must be said here, however, that the 58% (59) incidence of graduates in this study (103) in subjects outwith the relevant fields, reflects the wide experiential background of the sample which we have seen earlier in this chapter.

The high percentage of graduates in this study prompted the question of whether they were more attracted to the completion of complex questionnaires than non-graduates. A random sample of 10% (60) of non-respondents was therefore obtained, and single-sheet query forms which included a question about qualifications, were despatched. There was 54% (32) response and of these, there were: 38% (12) degrees; 31% (10) IPM; 34%

(11) professional qualifications other than the IPM; and 22% (7) HNC/HND. A comparison of the non-respondent data with that of respondents produced no significant differences in these areas.

The fact that the respondents were not different to the non-respondents in the matter of qualifications provided renewed confidence in the results. A comparison with the findings of earlier studies to determine whether trends were apparent, was therefore conducted.

Under one-third of Timperley's (1973) sample, and 36% of Watson's (1977) had a degree. In looking for possible trends, we shall concentrate on the lower age groups in the study reported here, and compare them with the equivalent groups in Watson's sample. This study has 54% (123) aged 23-39, while Watson's had 57% under age 41. Thus the two studies are almost similar in respect of their inclusion of people in the lower age groups.

We have already noted that 70% (72) of the graduates in this study (103) were in the age group 'under 40'. It is possible therefore, that the difference between this study's results for degrees (45%) and those of Watson (36%), may reflect an increase in graduate entry to personnel work, which has taken place in the period between the two studies.

Earlier, we noted also the strong association between the 'under 40s' and obtaining the IPM by a one year full-time course. It

is not suggested that the foregoing findings mean that degrees and/or the IPM qualification are becoming what Daniel and Millward (1983) called "a condition of entry to the occupation". They do, however, denote an increasing trend for incoming initial choosers to have a degree and/or an IPM qualification.

We have so far considered the backgrounds of the respondents to this study in terms of their work experience and qualifications. The following section completes the picture of the sample, with their social backgrounds.

Social background

According to Stewart et. al. (1980), "occupational careers reflect mainly advantages of family or education rather than purely occupational success". In the foregoing sections of this chapter, we have seen that the educational backgrounds of the respondents covered a wide range, much of it concerned with occupations they followed before entering personnel management.

We shall now look at their fathers' occupations which, according to Mansfield (1980) in his literature review of managers' backgrounds, provided "a good indication of the social origins of modern British managers".

Watson (1977: 79) analysed his sample by social class of origin according to the following parameters:

"Middle class I includes professional, managerial, administrative and business workers; Middle class II includes routine clerical, junior non-manual, shop-keepers, publicans and salesmen. The remaining group is sub-divided to give an intermediate group. This includes all those respondents whose fathers were 'upwardly mobile' from manual work into supervisory or 'own account' work during the respondents' up bringing. The main Working class group are those whose fathers are or were manual workers who were not mobile".

The 'father's occupation' responses in the study reported here were analysed in a similar manner, for comparison with Watson's results. There was one exception, which was the 'Intermediate' category, for it was impossible to classify this group from the questionnaire responses. Watson's data was derived from interviews, where information regarding 'upward mobility' is more easily obtained. Nevertheless, a comparison was made, using Watson's typology, which is presented below in Table 4.33.

8% (18) of the sample registered deceased/don't know responses.

Table 4.33

Personnel specialists - social class of origin

<u>Social class of origin</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Watson %</u>
Middle class I	84	40	42
Middle class II	71	34	20
Intermediate	-	-	13
Manual	<u>56</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>
Totals	<u>211</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The results of the two studies were similar. While there is a disparity in the Middle class II results, this can be explained by Watson's use of an Intermediate group whose members were 'upwardly mobile' during the respondents' upbringing. Their

destination was Middle class II.

74% (155) of the respondents in this study (211) came from Middle classes I and II. The interviewees (109) were asked if they could see any connection between their parents' influence, or their general family background, and the fact that they were in personnel work. 82% (89) said that they did not see any connection, and the majority did not expand on this, despite a gentle prompt. Some did however, give further information:

"...my parents were very anxious that I should do well academically - always encouraging. They wanted me to do technical work, but they are not disappointed I am a personnel officer"

(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"Not really - other than my parents encouraging me to formal education. I was attracted to personnel. I struggled to get here"

(Personnel Mgr, Machine Manufacture);

"There's no direct connection - I stumbled into it..."

(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"No. The strongest relationship is genetic rather than cultural - the gift of the gab! Interpersonal skills and the lack of numeracy - a general arts background rather than parental. My parents were factory workers"

(Personnel Director, Public Sector).

A common theme arose in three of these accounts, that of parental encouragement for education as a way to become socially mobile. Seven interviewees said they had been influenced by external factors such as their college, careers advice, hearing about personnel work, and seeing it performed. The remaining narratives were diverse in content. 26% (23) of the 'No' group (89) were initial choosers.

18% (20) of the interviewees said that their parental or family

background had influenced their choice of a career in personnel. The responses fell into two main types; being brought up in a 'people-conscious' home, and an awareness of industrial relations from an early age, due to the father's occupation:

"I was brought up to appreciate people, and relate to people, and I still enjoy personnel work for that reason"
(Personnel Officer, Tourism);

"...it was a caring situation - a supportive family background. It relates to the personnel job"
(Personnel Officer, Insurance).

While we may say that the foregoing group was motivated by 'harmony', the following accounts indicate that disharmony outside of the home was also a strong motivating factor:

"...my father was always union involved - he was a works convenor. So I was brought up seeing the workers' side of things" (Personnel Mgr, Mechanical Engineering);

"My father was a miner, and the NCB industrial relations work was explained to me and stimulated my interest from an early age" (Staff Manager, Coal);

"...my father was a colliery overman. I worked in the pit from the age of 14, so I had a relationship to the workforce - the 'them and us'. I thought about management, and bridging the gap"
(Industrial Relations Mgr, Coal);

"...very much so. I started as a trade union official. My father was connected with the TU movement"
(Personnel Mgr, Metal Goods).

Watson's (1977) study asked the same question of his interviewees, and "more than a third...were fairly emphatic in denying any connection between their present career and their upbringing". This study's interview sample (109) produced 82% (89) 'No' response. The difference in results needs to be examined.

The composition of the interview sample for this study was explained at the start of this chapter. There was no significant difference between the respondents and non-respondents for this question. All of the responses were clear and unequivocal, requiring no 'interpretation' for coding purposes.

The respondent sample of interviewees (68) had 31% (21) initial choosers, which corresponded with the composition of the questionnaire sample. At first it was thought that the non-respondent sample might have some bearing on the difference which was found with Watson's results. Obviously, in a sample of non-respondents, there was no information about them prior to the interview. 12% (5) of the non-respondents (41) were initial choosers. Initial choice has been mentioned as an issue here because it would appear to have more potential for parental influence than other modes of entry. Yet 90% (19) of the respondent initial choosers (21) said that there was no parental influence, together with 80% (4) of the equivalent non-respondent group (5). The difference between the two groups was clearly not significant.

The narratives which accompanied the 'No' responses for the initial chooser group showed that two sub-groups existed: the first had made a positive choice because of interest, generated by the personnel/IR aspects of their further education, by information received from friends/ other sources, or by the opportunity that personnel offered to use their perceived personal strengths; the second exhibited negative

choice, in that there were no openings in their preferred occupation, or that they had been placed in personnel after their selection for a general vacancy/traineeship. It is clear from these accounts that parental influence might not hold much sway in the face of the various factors mentioned, where educated adults were deciding on a future career, or alternatively, had the decision made for them by their employers.

In terms of sample composition, this study was similar to Watson's in the ratio of initial career/other respondents. We have already seen that the pre-personnel experience of later entrants was diverse, in common with Watson's sample, and that their modes of entry depicted a wider typology than the one described by Watson. The much lower effect of parental influence compared with Watson's study, however, remains unexplained.

Conclusion

The data in this chapter correspond well with other major studies, in points which have been of particular interest; the place of women in the occupation, the diversity of pre-personnel experience, modes of entry and occupational choice. The findings about modes of entry have led to suggestions regarding the expansion of the typology outlined by Watson (1977) by five additional sub-modes.

In respect of educational background, we have noted both the diversity of qualifications, and an apparently emergent trend

regarding initial choice and the possession of a degree and/or an IPM qualification. The data support both Guest and Horwood's (1980) suggestion that personnel specialists' backgrounds are diverse, and Tyson's (1979) views about the heterogeneity of specialists, and the diversity of the organizations in which they work.

From the interview data so far reported, we have an indication of the individuality of the respondents, and the lives behind the numbers in the study. This last point returns us to the title of this chapter. Who is the personnel specialist? The question is apposite in view of the heterogeneity of the sample.

When he attempted to answer the question of "Who are the managers?", Mansfield (1980) wrote that "any notion of the 'average manager' is likely to be as lacking in utility as the concept of 'the average man'", due to the wide variety of managers' educational, social and career backgrounds, and other considerations such as age, and membership of professional associations.

Any notion of identifying the 'average personnel specialist' is subject to similar constraints, and a review of the findings presented in this chapter must lead us to the same conclusion as Mansfield drew about 'average managers'. The main findings have however, indicated that if we have three pieces of information; age, sex, and whether or not specialists are initial choosers, we may make sensible generalisations about certain groups within the personnel specialism. Practitioners under the age of 30

will be more likely than older age groups to have a degree and/or an IPM qualification, and to have made personnel their initial choice of career. While women may attain managerial posts, they are in the minority compared to men, and are more likely to be found in officer-level jobs.

Generalisations, however, only serve as indicators of the predominant group within a given set of circumstances. They are never a reflection of the whole picture. It would seem then, that when asked "who is the personnel specialist?", the only sensible reply is, "which personnel specialist?".

One thing that our respondents have in common, however, is that they are employed in personnel management. Chapter Five considers what this means, in terms of their work activities.

CHAPTER FIVE : THE WORK OF PERSONNEL SPECIALISTS

Introduction

This chapter is about the activities and tasks performed by the respondents in the course of their jobs. It prepares a foundation both for Chapter Six, which concerns the 'managerial' elements of their work, and for the discussion in Chapter Ten about the knowledge used in personnel management.

We shall first look at the extent of various practices/tasks in personnel work, and whether McFarland's (1962) 'trashcan' is currently a feature of it in Scotland. Thereafter, we will consider the respondents' views on the most/least important, and the most/least interesting aspects of personnel work. Finally, we will examine data about the activities within their jobs which they considered were the most important, and those which they found most time-consuming.

Respondents' jobs - their responsibilities

This section is about the scope of the respondents' jobs. Their responsibilities in terms of establishments are shown below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Respondents' responsibilities - establishments

<u>Responsible for:</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Own base establishment only	113	49
All employer's UK establishments	38	17
All employer's Scottish establishments	39	17
All in a division/region/area	36	16
Missing values	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Thus, about half (113) of the respondents had responsibility for

their own base establishments only.

Table 5.2

Respondents' responsibilities - sections of the workforce

<u>Responsible for:</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
All sections of the workforce	205	90
Manual workers only	7	3
Non-manual workers only	10	4
Other	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Most of the respondents (90% : 205) had responsibility for all sections of the workforce. 3% (7) indicated that they covered specific sections of their workforces, eg sales staff, or a mixture of manual and non-manual workers within specific parts of their organizations.

The number of employees involved in the respondents' job responsibilities are shown below in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Numbers of employees covered by job responsibilities

<u>Number of employees</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>
Under 100	4	2
100 - 499	56	25
500 - 999	65	29
1000 - 1499	36	16
1500 - 1999	16	7
2000 - 2999	14	6
3000 - 3999	4	2
4000 - 4999	16	7
5000 - 9999	7	3
10000/ over	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>225</u>	<u>100</u>

While there was a wide range in the numbers of employees included within the jobs' responsibilities, 56% (125) had under a thousand. 79% (177) had below 2000 employees in their charge.

We have seen, from the range of job titles described in Chapter Four, that only 'specialist' titles, eg 'Training Manager' and 'Recruitment Manager' gave any indication of the main responsibilities of the jobs. The respondents were therefore asked to describe briefly the main areas of responsibility in their jobs.

Only 15% (35) responded with only one activity, while 85% (191) registered between two and four main components of their jobs (226). The composition of these latter responses was extremely varied, to the extent that there were 99 unique combinations of constituent responsibilities. These accounts took the form of, for example, "Industrial Relations, Health and Safety, Salary Administration, and Training", or "Personnel Planning, IR, Recruitment and Training".

Initially, there was some difficulty in determining the appropriate methods for analysing these data. This problem had some precedent, in that Daniel and Millward (1983) received responses to a similar question which, "frankly, were not very instructive", because:

"First, the same description of an activity could have quite different meanings in different types of establishment and, secondly, there was a range of the possible forms of involvement in the same activity".

These reasons demonstrate both the diversity and the contingent nature of personnel work.

The data about the respondents' main responsibilities were analysed according to the number of mentions that each activity

received, to obtain an overview of the main types of work undertaken. Later sections of this chapter discuss data about the respondents' degree of involvement in various activities.

The analysis of the number of mentions for each responsibility/activity is shown below in Table 5.4 . The descriptions are the respondents' own. As multiple mentions were made by 85% (191) of the sample, the column totals do not equal 100% (226).

Table 5.4

Number of mentions - main responsibilities of jobs

<u>Responsibility/activity</u>	<u>No. of mentions</u>	<u>% of sample (226)</u>	<u>Number of mentions as sole resp.</u>
Industrial Relations	104	46	4
Training/Mgt. Development	91	40	7
General personnel work	78	35	14
Recruitment	68	30	2
Salary administration	46	20	2
Administration	39	17	-
Personnel administration	31	13	5
Health and safety	19	8	1
Personnel planning	13	6	-
General management	12	5	-
Welfare	9	4	-
Employee communications	8	3	-
Pensions/benefits	5	2	-
Human relations	5	2	1
Personnel services	5	2	2
Policy formulation	4	2	2
Payroll	3	1	-
Research	3	1	-
Budgets	2	1	-
Statistics	1	1	-
Job evaluation	1	1	-
Other (eg security, PR)	13	6	-

According to Lawrence (1986: 71) industrial relations problems "usually [have] to reach a certain critical mass to get into the purview of the personnel department". If this is so, then the predominant activity in Table 5.4, industrial relations, may

tell us something about the employer/employee relationships in the organizations of those respondents who gave IR as one of their main responsibilities. This point will be pursued further in the last section of this chapter, which is partly concerned with their most important duties.

While Table 5.4 shows a diverse range of main responsibilities, the largest frequencies accrued to IR, training, general personnel work, and recruitment. There are two areas of work listed in Table 5.4 which are not strictly 'personnel'. These are 'other' and 'general management'.

Non-personnel responsibilities

The respondents were asked whether they had any responsibility for tasks which were not strictly personnel work. Briefly, our focus here is on two aspects of McFarland's (1962) ideas: first, that personnel is a 'trashcan', "a dumping ground for a broad array of functions having little to do with [its] major goals"; and second, that the extension of duties is disliked.

50% (114) of the sample said that they had responsibility for some non-personnel work (227). McFarland reported that 27.3% of his sample had "inappropriate" duties assigned to them.

In this study, 110 respondents reported the nature of their non-personnel involvement; 29% (32) in general management, 12% (13) in public relations, and 11% (12) in security. The remaining 48% (53) had between one and four duties drawn from the following diverse range of activities: catering; staff

travel arrangements; employee sales; company cars and insurance; the purchase and issue of industrial clothing; office services (switchboard, reception, stationery, office machinery); social club and competitions; servicing of committees; work study; plant quality circles; removal expenses; house loans; management accounting; company budget work; and assignments from the managing director. One wrote, "too numerous to mention", while another asked, "what is not personnel work?".

60% (65) of the interviewees (109) reported non-personnel duties, and they were asked why those duties were included in their jobs. The largest number of them, 46% (30), said that it was for traditional reasons, and that they had 'inherited' the tasks when appointed to their posts. McFarland (1962) noted that "historical reasons are often advanced" in explanations of non-personnel work. He also pointed to an interface between personnel and suggestion schemes, plant protection, safety, cafeteria and social functions. 19% (12) of the interviewees who had non-personnel duties said that their involvement in various of these activities resulted from the fact that there was a connection with employees.

An identical number however, felt that the duties were in their jobs by default:

"...we get anything new..." (Personnel Officer, Textiles);

" I have the ragbag of duties left over when the major functions were dished out. Someone has to do them. A lot of people like to define your job for you - "I don't deal with that, so it must be personnel..."
(Personnel Manager, Construction).

McFarland (1962) also mentioned that personnel staff were allocated some forms of non-personnel work because of their personality, or personal capacity for it. 14% (9) of the interviewees said they did a particular type of work because of their personal skills and/or previous experience. A personnel officer in the oil industry, for example, felt that his communication skills brought him an involvement in public relations which no-one else on site was able to do:

"...we are a small operating unit, and certain jobs are handled part-time. So I do PR on a reactive basis... ideally, it should be done by someone else - but practically, no".

43% (28) of the interviewees said that there was no-one else who could do their non-personnel tasks. 35% (23) said that works/ other management should do the work. 22% (14) however, said that the duties were easy/not onerous, or that they liked the work because it varied their jobs, both in content and in the range of personal contacts involved. There were no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents in any of the interview data reported above.

Table 5.5 below shows an analysis of the dispersal of 'trashcan' activities among the sample, according to the number of employees covered by the respondents' jobs.

Table 5.5Incidence of non-personnel duties according to number of employees covered by respondents' jobs

No. of employees	'Trashcan'		'Trashcan'		Yes/No Ratio	ALL	
	YES		NO			N	%
	N	%	N	%			
Under 500	35	31	25	23	6 : 4	60	27
500 - 999	38	33	27	24	6 : 4	65	29
1110 - 1999	27	24	25	23	5 : 5	52	23
2000/ over	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>30</u>	3 : 7	<u>48</u>	<u>21</u>
Totals	<u>114</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>100</u>		<u>225</u>	<u>100</u>

Table 5.5 shows that there tend to be more non-personnel duties in posts with under 1000 employees, where the Yes-No ratio is 6 : 4, and fewer where there are over 2000. However, while the size of the respondents' jobs, in terms of the number of employees covered, would appear to have some bearing on whether non-personnel duties were performed in the 'under 2000 employees' groups, it does not explain why 'trashcan' duties were not required of the remainder of the respondents in those groups. It was evident from the interviews however, that the decisive factors in whether non-personnel duties formed part of personnel jobs were the attitude(s) of senior/other management, and/or expediency.

The activities/tasks performed by the respondents

There is some support in Table 5.4 above for the first part of Sisson's (1989: 12) view that,

"...it cannot be assumed that the majority of personnel managers are necessarily involved in a wide range of activities, or that the nature of their involvement is the same from one organization to another..."

This section of the report will, among other things, investigate the second part of Sisson's statement about the involvement of

the sample in various personnel activities.

In their comparative study of an NHS region and a private manufacturing company, Guest and Horwood (1980) looked at the activities undertaken by personnel staff. They compiled a list of 85 tasks in more than 12 activity classifications, and the data which they obtained from their sample(s) were used first to make a public/private sector comparison. Further analyses of the various types of activity split them according to their 'strategic', 'analytic', 'advisory', 'instrumental-active', and 'instrumental-passive' qualities, and whether the activities were performed by 'generalists' or 'specialists'.

The study reported here included a list of 12 activity areas which were largely similar to those described by Guest and Horwood:

- Corporate planning
- Employee communication
- Employee development and training
- Employee or industrial relations
- Health and safety
- Manpower planning
- Organizational design and development
- Pay and benefits determination and administration
- Pension scheme administration and records
- Personnel records and information
- Recruitment/ selection
- Welfare

In this study, there was a total of 63 tasks. As its parameters were different to those of Guest and Horwood's study, it was inevitable that the two lists of tasks did not coincide. Some of the activity data presented in Appendix 2, Tables K and L, for example, relate to the 'application' of ideas derived from the social sciences, which are of relevance to the discussion of

knowledge use in Chapter Ten. Further, some tasks were included which related to the ideas or research findings of other writers.

Controls on recruitment

Recruitment and selection were identified by Timperley (1974) both as a prime source of managerial control, and as a management investment decision. Thus, questions about the authorisation and monitoring of vacancies, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of selection techniques were included to obtain data about the amount of control which was exerted on "the process of control" described by Timperley. Table K of Appendix 2 shows that 99.6% (224) of the respondents said that their employers controlled the filling of vacancies, while 65% (147) reported that an evaluation of the effectiveness of selection techniques was performed. Thus, while strict control of the manpower level and employee cost elements of recruitment were generally evident, 29% of the sample said that there was no control procedure for checking that suitable placements had been produced by their selection methods.

Internal labour markets

According to Hill (1981), many organizations create internal labour markets, "selecting from their own pool of labour rather than hiring on the market outside", in order to engender cooperation and commitment, and to foster loyalty. A question was therefore included to ascertain whether the planning of internal promotions took place, or whether promotions were generally conducted on an ad hoc basis. Table K of Appendix 2

shows that 81% (183) of responses said that their organizations prepared promotion plans for managers and supervisors.

Employee communications

Batstone (1984) pointed to an increase in the use of briefing groups in manufacturing plants, from 40% in 1978 to 63% in 1983. Millward and Stevens (1986) noted that 62% of the organizations in their study relied on team briefing in their communication systems. In this study, 76.5% (173) of the respondents (226) reported that briefing groups were held in their organizations.

Other forms of employee communications were also included in this study's activity list. Townley (1989) summarised the growth in employee communications reported in IPM (1981), Holmes (1977) and Hussey and Marsh (1983), and suggested that employee reports and team briefings had achieved prominence, although the employees' preference was for face-to-face contact rather than reports. Townley noted various methods of employee communication; employee noticeboards, house newspapers/magazines, employee reports, and audio-visual presentations. The activity lists in Appendix 2, Tables K and L therefore include producing annual statements of personnel policy, handbooks, circulars to employees, and newsletters or magazines.

The questions which generated Tables K and L in Appendix 2 may be seen in Appendix 3, Section C4, pages 16 - 21. First, for each activity/task, the respondents were asked whether it was performed at all in their organizations. Second, whether the

activity was part of their jobs, and third, to detail the nature of their involvement if their jobs included the activity. This third element was in three parts: 'advisory', where they advised others who would execute the task; 'executive', where they would perform the task themselves; and 'advisory & executive', where their jobs involved both performance of the task, and giving advice to others about it.

The report of the data obtained from the schedule of activity/task questions is in two parts. Table K of Appendix 2 contains the data relating to the respondents' organizations, while Table L in Appendix 2 concerns the respondents' jobs.

Activities in respondents' organizations

The highest percentages of "yes" responses in Appendix 2, Table K show the 'core' activities of personnel work, which are of four types. First, there are activities connected to compliance with statutory requirements, eg labour turnover statistics, the administration of sick pay, and health and safety inspection and other provisions. Second, there are activities for the control of manpower levels and costs. Third, there are those which involve the 'mechanics' of employing people: recruitment procedures; administering personnel and other records; determining and administering payment systems; providing adequate/appropriate training; producing information for employees about their employer and employment; and counselling employees about welfare matters. Finally, there is the development and maintenance of employee/industrial relations

through joint consultative and/ or negotiating arrangements.

Just over three-quarters of the respondents noted their employers' involvement with personnel planning and forecasting, magazines or newsletters, briefing groups, job evaluation, and the use of recruitment consultants to recruit senior staff. While these activities seem to be fairly wide-spread, they do not appear to be 'necessary' components of personnel work in the organizations of another quarter of our sample.

About two-thirds of the respondents reported that their employers engaged in the following: producing an annual statement of personnel policy; using specifications in selection; and evaluating the effectiveness of selection methods. 61% reported forecasting labour turnover and/or absenteeism, using selection tests, and developing employee participation schemes.

These two findings would suggest that, while all of the activities mentioned in connection with them have a majority use, they are not 'obligatory' elements of personnel work in the organizations which do not perform them.

Finally, there are the activities which seem to be less well supported; organization analysis and other organizational development techniques, and job re-design.

Activities in respondents' jobs

Table L in Appendix 2 contains the data about the respondents' jobs. The analysis shows for each activity/task: those who

said that it was part of their jobs, detailing the nature of their involvement - advisory, executive, or advisory-plus-executive; and those who reported that the activity/task was not part of their jobs.

Advisory tasks

The data in Table L in Appendix 2 which are of immediate concern here are those which relate to the solely 'advisory' element of the various tasks. There were only 13 tasks from the list of 63 which had 50% or more response as advisory only. These were:

Preparation of annual manpower cost and budgets	- 58%
Producing promotion plans for managers/supervisors	- 61%
Producing corporate plans	- 77%
Processing payroll	- 61%
Compiling productivity statistics	- 60%
Forecasting the demand for staff one year ahead	- 52%
Maintaining pension records (not computerised)	- 51%
Using organizational development techniques	- 50%
Using job re-design techniques	- 56%
Using group-based incentive payment schemes	- 59%
Conducting regular safety inspections	- 52%
Using company suggestion schemes	- 60%
Developing employee participation schemes	- 50%

These were all tasks which gained responses of 'not my job' from 30 - 68% of all the respondents who said the task was performed in their organizations. It would seem from the above list that these are the tasks which involve other management/specialists to a greater extent than the other 50 tasks which achieved lower, often very much lower, response for 'advisory' only.

The lowest responses for only 'advisory' involvement were in advertising vacancies, and in issuing circulars/ memos to management and employees about employee-related matters. The

issue of circulars to management may be a reflection of the 'policeman' role of personnel which will be seen in Chapter Eight; making sure that managers have all the information they need, so that they do not transgress agreements/employment legislation. We shall see later that there is another face to the commonsense measure of keeping managers abreast of employee developments. This is the provision of grounds to say "I told you so" when managers ignore advice, thus increasing both the credibility and the authority of the personnel department.

For the remaining 47 tasks in Appendix 2, Table L,, the combined 'executive' and 'advisory plus executive' responses show that between 55 and 81% of the respondents who had these tasks in their jobs were actually performing the tasks themselves, rather than solely giving advice about them to others. The activities within which these tasks fell included recruitment, training, industrial relations, record-keeping and statistics, safety, employee welfare, and employee communications.

Guest and Horwood's (1980) study was mentioned earlier, when it was said that the purpose of their research project was different to this one. Their activity list, for example, included the tasks of "making offers of employment", "taking up references", and "dealing with individual pay complaints". In other words, their study notionally covered every task involved in personnel work. Despite the fact that the schedule of activities/tasks which generated Tables K and L in Appendix 2 was in many ways different, there was some common ground.

In their report (pp25-26), Guest and Horwood presented the "tasks most commonly undertaken by personnel staff". These were "all the tasks undertaken by over 50% of the personnel staff in either or both" organizations studied. Their guideline about the tasks most commonly undertaken was used in this study, and all tasks or activities which were performed by more than 50% of the sample are listed in Table 5.6 below. This table also includes comparative figures from Guest and Horwood (1980), shown to the right of the table.

The reader is asked to note that Table 5.6 does not signify the amount of involvement the respondents had with the activities in terms of time spent.

Table 5.6

Activities/tasks most commonly undertaken - performed by over 50% of the sample

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Respondents engaged in activity</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>Guest & Horwood comparison</u>	
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>Public %</u>	<u>Private %</u>
Authorise/monitor filling of vacancies	202	90	225	-	-
Issue circulars/memos to mgt. on employee-related matters	200	89	225	-	-
Issue circulars etc.to employees on employee-related matters	193	86	225	-	-
Advertise vacancies in local/national media	193	85	226	53	54
Maintain personnel records (not computerised)	167	78	214	-	-
Present induction training	175	78	225	57	54

(continued overleaf)

Table 5.6 continued

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Respondents engaged in activity</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>Guest & Horwood comparison</u>	
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>Public %</u>	<u>Private %</u>
Produce job descriptions	172	76	226	41	73
Assess training needs to produce training programme	167	74	226	70	56
Writing and/or providing company handbooks for employees	163	72	226	-	-
Using appraisal techniques to review employee performance	162	72	226	-	-
Presenting in-house training courses	161	71	226	57	54
Conducting welfare counselling interviews	161	71	226	55	44
Consulting with union/employee reps. on non-pay matters	159	70	226	-	-
Compiling labour turnover statistics	155	70	223 41	63	
Compiling sickness statistics	156	70	224	-	-
Maintaining training records	153	69	223	-	-
Preparing annual manpower costs/budgets	153	68	226	-	-
Compiling statistics on disciplinary problems	148	66	223	-	-
Conducting periodic salary reviews	141	63	225	-	-
Holding briefing groups	141	63	226	-	-
Compiling statistics on training costs	138	62	223	-	-

(continued overleaf)

Table 5.6 (continued)

Activities/tasks most commonly undertaken - performed by over 50% of the sample

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Respondents engaged in activity</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>Guest & Horwood comparison</u>	
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>Public %</u>	<u>Private %</u>
Compiling statistics on grievances	135	61	222	-	-
Designing annual training programme	136	60	226	-	-
Producing promotion plans for managers and supervisory staff	134	59	226	-	-
Using personnel specifications in selection	132	58	226	64	48
Using job evaluation techniques	118	57	226	-	-
Maintaining personnel records (computerised)	120	55	217	-	-
Using joint consultative committees	122	55	224	-	-
Forecasting staff demand one year ahead	122	54	225	-	-
Designing/implementing local payment systems (not national/industry agreed)	121	54	224	-	-
Negotiating with TU reps. about pay and conditions	119	53	226	51	24
Compiling statistics on disputes	115	52	223	-	-
Compiling statistics on accidents	115	52	221	-	-

Of the 33 tasks in Table 5.6, ten involved compiling statistics

and record-keeping. Other control activities were identified in manpower costs and budgets, staff forecasting, job evaluation, pay determination, salary administration, and the authorising/monitoring of vacancies. About half of the tasks therefore, involve the regulation of, or the monitoring of, the workforce and/or related costs and manning levels. Nominally, the four employee/industrial relations activities may be said to cover these same things, in negotiating and/or consulting with employee representatives about them. Training and management development account for four activities, as did employee communication.

There was one welfare task in Table 5.6 , welfare counselling. If nothing else, this result at least confirms that one component of welfare-type work appears to be a normal part of the jobs of the majority of our respondents, although the amount of time they spend in welfare counselling was not asked. Only 4% (9) of the respondents in Table 5.4 at the start of this chapter gave welfare as one of their main responsibilities (226). Later in this chapter however, in the discussion about the respondents' most important and most time-consuming duties, welfare will be examined further.

The most important/least important aspects of personnel work

The respondents were asked to choose the single most important, and the single least important, aspect of personnel work from a schedule of activities which included the category 'Other'. Those respondents who chose 'Other' were asked to specify the

type of work they meant. The questions can be seen in Appendix 3, page 23, D2 and D3. Table 5.7 below shows the frequencies and rounded percentages for both the most important and the least important types of work in personnel.

Table 5.7

Comparison of the single most important and single least important aspect of personnel work - frequencies

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Most important</u>		<u>Least important</u>	
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Industrial/employee relations	124	55	2	1
Recruitment/selection	28	13	2	1
Training/management development	28	13	19	9
Personnel administration	22	10	57	26
Wages/salary admin.	6	3	69	31
Health/safety, welfare	3	1	44	10
Other	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>12</u>
Totals	<u>224</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>100</u>

Industrial/employee relations were the most important aspect of personnel work. It was perceived to be most important by substantially more than both recruitment/selection and training. All of these three activities also gained very low endorsement in the 'least important' responses. The most important personnel activity in the study conducted by Timperley and Osbaldeston (1975) was recruitment/selection. The respondents' emphasis here on industrial/employee relations as the most important aspect of personnel work will be explored further later in this chapter.

Wage/salaries administration was most frequently mentioned as the least important activity, followed by personnel administration. Both of these types of work gained more endorsement in the 'least important' results than they did in the 'most

important' ones. While health/safety and welfare had the lowest response as a 'most important' activity, more respondents perceived it as having more importance than 'other', personnel administration, and wages/salary administration when they were asked to specify the least important aspects of personnel work.

In the 'most important' category 'Other' (13), 46% (6) felt that all of the listed aspects were important. The remainder of the responses were varied, and included managing change, effective communication, organizational development, and securing a maximum return on the investment in staff.

In the 'least important' category 'Other' (27), 44% (12) felt that all aspects of personnel work were important. The remainder of the responses were varied, and included routine statistics/reports, general administration, and writing job descriptions.

The most and least interesting types of personnel work

The questions about the most/least interesting types of personnel work can be seen in Appendix 3, page 24, D4 and D5. The response frequencies are shown in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8
The most and least interesting types of personnel work

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Most interesting</u>		<u>Least interesting</u>	
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Industrial/employee relations	119	53	2	1
Training/management development	53	24	12	5
Recruitment/selection	19	8	9	4
Personnel administration	19	8	47	21
Wages/salary admin.	6	3	95	42
Other	5	2	7	3
Health/safety, welfare	4	2	53	24
Totals	<u>225</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>225</u>	<u>100</u>

Industrial/employee relations were seen as the most interesting type of work, ahead of training/management development by 29%. Wages/salary administration was reported as the least interesting activity, followed by health/safety, welfare, and personnel administration.

From the data in Tables 5.7 and 5.8, we can see the respondents' clear preference for types of work which involve a high level of interpersonal content, at the expense of activities which predominantly include paperwork. The 'Other' responses in Table 5.8 reflect this point. Only one person wrote that none of the types of work lacked interest. The 'most interesting' responses for 'Other' were communications (2), managing change (2) and organizational development(1), while the 'least interesting' were statistics (2), general administration (2), bonus scheme administration (1) and pensions administration (1). Possibly, the respondents' preference for work which is interpersonal may reflect Carlson's (1951) and Mintzberg's (1973) ideas, that the fragmentation which results from interactive work alleviates the

boredom of processing paperwork. There may, however, be other reasons for the respondents' preference.

Respondents' jobs - most important and most time-consuming duties

The questions about the respondents' most important and most time-consuming duties appear in Appendix 3, page 15, C2 and C3. Both questions were free-response ones, and the respondents were asked to rank up to six duties which they considered most important (C2) and most time-consuming (C3). These questions used the word 'rank' in order that the respondents would be clear about what they were required to do. In the discussion which follows, however, duties which they 'ranked' will be described as ratings, in order to avoid confusion later in this section when the duties will be allocated ranks in accordance with their mean scores.

When the responses to questions C2 and C3 were coded, it soon became clear that many respondents had written duties which were not ascribed to any of the types of activity/tasks we have seen in the tables previously shown in this chapter. The respondents had described the 'managerial work' elements of their jobs. They said how they performed their duties. The responses, which are listed below, correspond very closely indeed to the types of activity which were identified as the 'how' of managerial work in Chapter One:

Advising/ guiding others

Attending meetings
 Communication with managers/others
 Developing personal relationships
 Handling questions
 Informal discussions/meetings
 Liaising with others
 Making/maintaining contacts
 Talking through problems
 Telephone calls
 Unplanned interruptions
 Walking the job

All of these responses were coded 'Interpersonal'.

The frequencies for the most important duties rated 1 to 6 appear in Appendix 2, Table M (1 - 6), and Appendix 2, Table N (1 - 6) shows those for the most time-consuming duties. Non-response was 6% (14) for the most important duties, and 8% (19) for the most time-consuming ones.

Four main points arise from Tables M and N in Appendix 2, two of which give us further insight into the respondents' jobs.

First, there was a wide range of duties considered most important and most time-consuming. Second, the response-rates fell progressively after Rating 2 in both questions, as shown in Table 5.9 below.

Table 5.9
Responses in Ratings 1 -6 - most important and most
time-consuming duties (N = 229)

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Most important</u>		<u>Most time-consuming</u>	
	<u>Response</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>%</u>
1	215	94	210	92
2	215	94	209	91
3	210	92	198	86
4	198	86	177	77
5	174	76	147	64
6	146	64	127	55

We have already seen from Table L in Appendix 2 that the majority of the respondents were engaged in a diverse range of

activities/ tasks. It would therefore seem, from the response rates in Table 5.9 that what has been reported in Tables M and N, Appendix 2, are the duties which the respondents considered important enough, and time-consuming enough, to warrant a mention.

Third, there is a considerable variation in the composition of the responses between 'most important' and 'most time-consuming'; for example, while 94 people considered administration important enough to rate it anywhere in 1 to 6, there were 163 who rated it 1 to 6 as consuming most of their time. The reverse can be seen with some other duties, health and safety for instance, where 42 rated its importance 1 to 6, while only 27 rated it 1 to 6 as consuming most time.

Fourth and last, Tables M and N in Appendix 2 show that while 22 duties were reported by the sample, some gained more endorsement than others. General personnel work for example, had only one response as a 'most important' duty, while Training/MD had 149.

The mean value of each duty shown in Tables M and N, Appendix 2, was calculated (weighting Rated 1 = 6 to Rated 6 = 1), to produce an overall rank order of the duties reported, for those who reported them. Table 5.10 below shows the rankings for both the most important and the most time-consuming duties, with their respective means.

Bearing in mind the four points raised earlier about the composition of the data in Appendix 2, Tables M and N, we can

see from the ranks shown in Table 5.10 the relative perceived importance of the 22 reported duties, against the respondents' perceptions of how time-consuming those duties were.

Table 5.10

Rank order and related means of duties perceived to be
the most important and the most time-consuming
within the respondents' jobs

<u>Duty</u>	<u>Most important</u>		<u>Most time-consuming</u>	
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Recruitment	1	4.534	2	4.443
Policy formulation	2	4.340	12	3.625
IR negotiation/ consultation	3	4.277	3	4.277
Personnel planning	4	4.227	14	3.382
General personnel work	5	4.000	22	2.250
General management	6	3.900	1	4.588
Managing own staff	7	3.818	9	3.783
Personnel admin.	8	3.792	10	3.759
Salary administration	9	3.772	6	4.020
Interpersonal	10	3.549	8	3.804
Training/MD	11	3.517	11	3.688
Budgets	12	3.385	13	3.545
Personnel services	13	3.300	5	4.000
Health and Safety	14	3.167	20	2.185
Administration	15	3.043	7	3.828
Research	16	2.900	15	3.320
Welfare	17	2.875	16	3.278
Payroll processing	18	2.857	21	2.714
Statistics	19	2.692	4	4.235
Job evaluation	20	2.571	19	3.142
Pensions/benefits	21	2.294	18	3.154
Other	22	2.267	17	3.210

While there was a measure of agreement between the ranks for 'most important', and those of 'most time-consuming', ($\rho = +.45$) it was not significant ($t = 2.260$). From observation however, there are substantial differences apparent between the respective ranks of policy formulation, personnel planning, general personnel work, and health and safety, which were all reported as less time-consuming than their 'importance' warranted. Duties which ranked higher for their

time-consumption than for their importance were general management, personnel services, administration and statistics.

Table 5.10 shows that the respondents' work contained different emphases in terms of their perceptions of the importance of their duties, and of the ways in which they spent their time. Before we infer too much from the high 'importance' rankings of policy formulation, personnel planning, and general management, it is worth noting that while these were very important elements of their work for the people who reported them, those respondents accounted for relatively small proportions of the total sample, thus: policy formulation, 22% (47); personnel planning 23% (49); and general management, 9% (20).

The problem with Table 5.10 is that it presents only those duties which the respondents felt were important/time-consuming enough to mention. It says nothing about the duties which did not meet each individual's rating standard, and therefore nothing about the relative importance and time-consumption of each of the 22 duties for the sample as a whole.

The mean value for each duty was re-calculated, again weighted (Rated 1 = 6 to Rated 6 = 1), but this time the divisor was 229, the total number of respondents who could potentially have been performing the duty.

The means were then ordered to provide the ranks shown in Table 5.11 below, which shows the relative placings of the duties most important and most time-consuming.

Table 5.11
Rank order and related means of duties most important and
most time-consuming for the sample as a whole (229)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>Most important</u>		<u>Most time-consuming</u>	
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>
IR negotiation and consultation	1	2.948	3	2.092
Interpersonal	2	2.852	1	4.502
Recruitment	3	2.633	4	2.057
Training/ MD	4	2.288	5	1.546
Administration (correspondence/reports)	5	1.249	2	2.725
Salary administration	6	0.939	6	0.651
Personnel planning	7	0.904	7	0.502
Policy formulation	8	0.891	9.5	0.380
Personnel admin.	9	0.878	8	0.476
Health and Safety	10	0.581	13	0.332
Managing own staff	11	0.550	9.5	0.380
Welfare	12	0.402	16	0.258
General management	13	0.341	12	0.341
Research	14	0.253	11	0.362
Budgets	15	0.192	18	0.170
Pensions/benefits	16	0.170	17	0.179
Statistics	17	0.153	14	0.314
Other	18	0.148	15	0.267
Personnel services	19	0.144	19	0.140
Payroll	20	0.087	21	0.083
Job evaluation	21	0.079	20	0.096
General personnel work (sic)	22	0.017	22	0.040

There was substantial correlation between the rankings for 'most

important' and 'most time-consuming', for the full table of 22 weighted ranks ($\rho = + .955$). There were however, noticeable differences in the means which generated the rank order table. Our main interest here is the group of duties which were ranked 1 to 5 as 'most important'.

Industrial relations negotiation/consultation secured first place, by only a small margin over Interpersonal. The mean for Interpersonal as a time-consuming duty is very high (4.502), and substantially larger than the means for administration (2.725) ranked 2, and industrial relations (2.092) ranked 3.

There was an interesting juxtaposition of the ranks for administration, which was a poor fifth (1.249) as 'most important', but a strong second as 'most time-consuming'. In the 'most important' ranks below rank 5, other duties which took more time than their 'importance' warranted were; general management, research, pensions/benefits, statistics, other ('trashcan' activities), payroll, job evaluation, and general personnel work.

Table 5.11 shows that the duties the respondents felt were most important centred on highly interactive non-routine work. The time consumed by administration duties, shown in Table 5.8 to be low in interest-value, may lead us to surmise that personnel specialists may experience conflicting priorities/preferences in the course of their jobs.

One outstanding exception to this last point is the

interpersonal content of the respondents' work. It was a close second to industrial relations as 'most important', but greatly outstripped all other kinds of duties in the time consumed by it. One obvious reason for this is that the respondents had given the 'how' of their work, rather than the 'what' of it. It is interesting to note that the free-response question about their job responsibilities which generated Table 5.4 did not produce any responses of the sort which resulted in the allocation of an 'interpersonal' coding.

Conclusion

Chapter Five has shown that, while the respondents were all working 'in personnel management', they had a diverse range of both responsibilities and duties. Table 5.4 showed that only 12% (26) 'specialist' jobs existed in the sample (226). The rest had jobs which were varied in their constituent responsibilities.

The respondents were also varied in the nature of their involvement with a wide range of activities and tasks. Thirty-three tasks were found to be commonly undertaken. These concerned control activities, the management of the employer/employee interface through industrial relations, and providing information to employees about their employment.

Throughout the data in this chapter, there has been an emphasis on industrial relations. In the questionnaire, the label 'industrial or employee relations' was used throughout all the questions which related to this chapter. Yet, in the free-

response replies, it was clear that the respondents were engaged in IR - the process of negotiation and/or consultation with trade union representatives. Although IR received 104 mentions as a main job responsibility in Table 5.4, the results from Table M (1 - 6) show that 69% (158) of the sample considered IR to be one of the six most important duties they performed.

An overview of the data in this chapter shows that it is appropriate to describe personnel work as kaleidoscopic. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (7th edition) gives the figurative definition of a kaleidoscope as " a constantly changing group of ...interesting objects". We have seen that some of those 'objects' were seen to be more interesting than others. The operational principles of a kaleidoscope tube, however, are also of relevance here. Drawing an analogy between a kaleidoscope and personnel management, we can see that a great many tasks exist within it, but not all are revealed in any one viewing (job). Each view we take, each job we look at, reveals a different composition. Some elements remain constant, some appear, and some disappear. The kaleidoscope metaphor goes some way towards recognising the individuality of each respondent's job, which was evident in the questionnaires' raw data.

In Chapter Six, we shall further explore managerial work, which was discussed first in Chapter One, and which the respondents spontaneously identified for us in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER SIX : PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AS MANAGERIAL WORK

Introduction

This chapter first considers how the respondents spent their time at work. It will later examine their hours of work, how their work is generated, and their contacts both within and outside their organizations. Finally, it will look at personnel management in relation to the ten roles which, Mintzberg (1973) suggested, formed a 'gestalt' in managerial work.

Respondents' perceptions of how they spent their time at work

The respondents were asked to rank various activities according to the amounts of time they spent on each (Appendix 3, p12, B28). The word 'rank' was used so that they would be clear about what they were required to do. In the discussion which follows, the respondents' 'ranks' will be described as ratings, to avoid confusion with the ranks imposed on the data by the analysis. The frequency tables for this question appear in Appendix 2, Table O (1 - 9).

The ratings were weighted, (Rated 1st = 9, to rated 9th = 1), and the mean scores for each activity were calculated to produce the rank order which is shown below in Table 6.1 . This table shows the overall ranking of the various activities according to the amount of time spent on them, for the whole sample.

Table 6.1Overall ranking of activities by time spent on them

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
1	Formal meetings	6.535	224
2	Informal meetings	6.484	223
3	Correspondence	6.053	224
4	Telephone calls	5.946	224
5	Planning	5.750	220
6	Routine paperwork	5.699	223
7	Walking round office/site	3.986	217
8	Casual encounter talks	3.809	215
9	Other	3.553	47

Table 6.1 provides an overview of the way time is spent in various activities in personnel work, and it confirms much of what was written about managerial work and the personnel occupation in Chapters One and Two. The predominance of interpersonal and information-processing activities are apparent from Ranks 1 to 4, which together have relegated Planning to Rank 5. On the basis of rankings alone, there is some support here for Johnston's (1978) view that planning can seem a 'luxury' in managerial work due to the preponderance of interactive and reactive pressures. An examination of the means, however, shows that planning is an active contender among the activities which engage most time in personnel work. Indeed, 56% of respondents (220) rated planning between 1 and 4. Comparative figures for the activities ranked 1 to 4 in Table 6.1 are: formal meetings 66%; informal meetings 67%; correspondence 61%; and telephone calls 63%.

No inference can be drawn from Table 6.1 alone about the relative importance of the listed activities in personnel work. We already know, however, from Chapter Five, Tables 5.8 and 5.9,

that the activities coded as interpersonal not only took up the most time, but were also perceived as being important. While 'walking around' and 'casual encounter talks' ranked 7th and 8th in Table 6.1, a later section of this chapter will show that, for some interviewees, 'walking the job' was a regular feature of their work, in which they encouraged employee-contact.

The category 'Other' provided data about activities which were not covered by the types of work outlined in the question. It was a useful inclusion, insofar as it brought to light various other time-consuming activities performed by 47 respondents. Of these, 47% did not indicate the type of activity that they meant. The remainder reported; travelling 24%, welfare visiting 13%, financial analysis 4%, research 4%, and preparatory work for training courses 4% (47). One training manager in retailing assisted in the store at times of staff shortage. Another respondent wrote that he spent 35% of his time "Doing things!".

How Directors, Managers and Officers spend their time

The mean scores for each activity were calculated (weighted Rated 1st = 9 to Rated 9th = 1) for the three job levels of Director, Manager, and Officer. These are presented below in Table 6.2 , which also shows the overall mean scores for comparison purposes.

Table 6.2

Mean scores for Directors, Managers and Officers in relation to the ranks shown in Table 6.1 above

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Overall</u> (229)	<u>Director</u> (8)	<u>Manager</u> (129)	<u>Officer</u> (92)
1	Formal meetings	6.535	6.500	6.584	6.473
2	Informal meetings	6.484	7.750	6.700	5.989
3	Correspondence	6.053	6.625	5.635	6.582
4	Telephone calls	5.946	6.250	5.848	6.055
5	Planning	5.750	5.500	5.833	5.651
6	Routine paperwork	5.699	6.625	5.360	6.089
7	Walking around	3.986	4.000	4.121	3.788
8	Casual talks	3.809	5.000	3.769	3.756
9	Other	3.553	9.000*	3.414	3.471

* This score derived from one director who gave travelling to sites and conferences a rating of 1 for time-consumption.

The mean scores for each job level were ordered to provide ranks for the various activities, produced in Table 6.3 (a - c) below.

Table 6.3 (a - c) - Rank order of time spent by job level

<u>(a) Director</u>			<u>(b) Manager</u>		
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1	9.000	Travel	1	6.700	Informal meetings
2	7.750	Informal meetings	2	6.584	Formal meetings
3.5	6.625	Correspondence	3	5.848	Telephone calls
3.5	6.625	Routine paperwork	4	5.833	Planning
5	6.500	Formal meetings	5	5.635	Correspondence
6	6.250	Telephone calls	6	5.360	Routine paperwork
7	5.500	Planning	7	4.121	Walking around
8	5.000	Casual talks	8	3.769	Casual talks
9	4.000	Walking around	9	3.414	Other

<u>(c) Officer</u>		
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1	6.582	Correspondence
2	6.473	Formal meetings
3	6.089	Routine paperwork
4	6.055	Telephone calls
5	5.989	Informal meetings
6	5.651	Planning
7	3.788	Walking around
8	3.756	Casual talks
9	3.471	Other

The rank orders of the three job levels are broadly the same.

A rank order comparison was conducted between Directors/Managers, Directors/Officers, and Managers/Officers. There was positive agreement between Directors and Managers ($\rho = +.61$), between Directors and Officers ($\rho = +.70$), and between Managers and Officers ($\rho = +.46$).

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted for each of the nine activities to ascertain whether significant differences existed between the job levels, followed by a Scheffe test to determine where the differences, if any, lay. According to Bryman and Cramer (1990: 141), the Scheffe test is rigorous; "the most conservative in the sense that it is least likely to find significant differences between groups...it is also exact for unequal numbers of subjects in the groups".

For the tasks of paperwork ($F = 3.575$), telephone calls ($F = 0.4483$), walking around ($F = 0.5991$), planning ($F = 0.2092$) and casual discussions ($F = 1.7274$), no two groups were significantly different at the .05 level.

Two areas of significant difference at the .05 level were found: Officers spent more of their time on correspondence than Managers did; and Managers differed from Officers by spending the greatest amount of time on informal meetings.

The ranks shown for Directors, Managers and Officers present an overview of the ways in which time is spent in each level of job. The weight of bureaucratic administration falls on the Officers, while the prime information-gathering/ exchange

activities are conducted to a greater extent by the Managers and Directors. Both the Directors and Officers engage in planning, but Managers spend more time on this than the other two levels. Comparatively, Directors spend the least time on planning.

The two Directors interviewed both received a great deal of mail. Their external mail tended to be from other employers and various government departments giving or requesting information, and from concerns offering goods, services or publications. Their internal mail concerned personnel-related matters in which they were either 'copied in' for information, or requested to report progress on on-going matters, or requested to initiate action on new issues/problems.

Both of these Directors said that they kept work which they perceived to be very important and/or confidential, and that they delegated the rest to subordinate staff, who then returned the completed work for discussion/approval/signature, depending on the nature of the assignment.

This format of working may account for the high ranking of correspondence and routine paperwork shown for the respondent directors in Table 6.3. It may also explain the Managers' ranks of 5 and 6 for these activities, in that the managers in turn may delegate all/part of the work to their own subordinates.

Only 12% of the sample were sole personnel specialists in their organizations. Where an officer or manager is the only personnel representative, a major involvement with

correspondence and routine paperwork may well be unavoidable, due to a lack of other staff to undertake the work.

Directors reported more time spent in the information-gathering/exchange processes of informal meetings, telephone calls, and casual encounter discussions than the other two job levels.

While the Directors reported that walking around took up less of their time than other activities, their mean score for tours is marginally higher than that reported by the Officers.

The managers had more time spent on informal and formal meetings, planning, and walking around than the Officers; but less on correspondence, routine paperwork, and telephone calls.

According to Yukl (1989: 58), correspondence, telephone calls, formal meetings, unscheduled meetings and observational tours are the five main sources of managerial information. Lawrence (1986: 33-38) wrote that there were four main reasons for meetings and discussions: information and coordination; information and control; solving problems; and devising future initiatives, all of which "are often mixed up in practice, overlap and intermingle, but they can be separated out analytically".

From the data so far reported in Chapters Five and Six, we have seen that personnel specialists engage in the activities of planning, organising, directing and controlling, which were emphasised by the 'traditional management' writers (cf. Taylor, 1911; Fayol, 1949; Gulick, 1937). We have also seen that

they reported spending the major part of their time at work on activities identified by the 'managerial work/empirical research' writers: verbal, predominantly face-to-face communication; and information gathering and exchange (cf. Carlson, 1951; Brewer and Tomlinson, 1964; Mintzberg, 1973, 1975; Kotter, 1982a).

From Table 6.1 above we have also some indication of the fragmented nature of much managerial work (cf. Mintzberg, 1973, 1975; Stewart, 1967), shown in the mean scores for informal meetings and telephone calls. Stewart (1983) wrote that telephone calls "can contribute a lot to the frequency of interruptions". The matter of fragmentation will be pursued further in the next section, which concerns working hours.

How much time is spent on work

The interviewees were asked how much time they normally spent on work, and what their contractual hours were. There was only one part-time personnel manager, who worked 16 hours a week for a small private company. The other interviewees' normal working weeks ranged from 37 to 80 hours, with a mean, median, and modal value of 45 hours. In comparison, Burns' (1957) managers worked 41.5 hours, Horne and Lupton's (1965) worked 44 hours, and Stewart's (1967) worked 41.25 hours, (inclusive of official entertaining, company social activities, and working at home).

In contrast, the contractual weekly hours of our sample ranged from 34 to 40, with a mean of 36 hours, and median and modal values of 37 hours. All of the interviewees, apart from the

part-time manager, and one who felt that "attendance for long hours doesn't mean effectiveness", worked overtime as a regular feature of their work.

The interviewees were asked if there was any pattern to the overtime hours they worked. Their responses are shown in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4

Pattern of overtime working

<u>Overtime pattern</u>	<u>Frequ-</u> <u>ency</u>	<u>%</u>
No pattern	39	36 *
Stay late only	26	24
Varies daily, plus weekends	13	12 **
In early and stay late	12	11
In early, stay late plus home	10	9
In early only	3	3
Varies daily, never weekends	3	3
No overtime worked	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>107</u>	<u>99</u>

* difference: respondents 26% (17); non-respondents 54% (22)
(chi-square 8.499, p = .01)

** difference: respondents 18% (12); non-respondents 2% (1)
(chi-square 5.872, p = .05)

While just over one-third accommodated overtime work by adjusting their hours to suit various factors, such as the urgency of the work, or the complexity of its content, it was clear that the others had developed routine patterns of overtime working which provided the best 'fit' between their jobs and their home/social lives. The frequencies for the kinds of work that the interviewees normally did in overtime hours are shown below in Table 6.5 .

Table 6.5

<u>Kinds of work performed in overtime hours</u>		
<u>Kind of work</u>	<u>Frequ- ency</u>	<u>%</u>
Continuation of normal work	37	35
Work requiring quiet	28	26*
Special projects	17	16
Administration/routine	12	11
Whatever is required	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>
Totals	<u>106</u>	<u>99</u>

* difference: respondents 31% (20); non-respondents 19% (8)
(chi-square 4.566, p = .05)

One interviewee explained why he felt overtime working was necessary in personnel work generally:

"...a lot of personnel involvement is unstructured and unpredictable"

(Personnel Officer, N.H.S.).

The predominant reasons for the need to work longer hours concerned freedom from interruptions and telephone calls:

"...I do two out of four Saturday mornings. It's peaceful to write. I order my priorities...the interruptions in my daily work preclude good work-flow and organisation"
(Personnel Officer, Education);

"...I do my projects at home...away from the 'phone"
(Personnel & Admin. Mgr., Oil drilling equipment);

"I do the bulky, lengthy work like procedures at home, at weekends. I can't do detailed work uninterrupted. I can't lock myself away, so I take it home"
(Personnel Manager, Tourism);

"...I catch up on my paperwork, without interruptions..."
(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications).

Stewart (1967) suggested that "most managers spend little or no time just thinking", as they were likely to be doing other activities at the same time. Some of the interviewees, however, identified part of their overtime hours as 'thinking time', again in the context of being free from interruptions:

"I start early before the 'phones ring, and stay half an hour at night. I take work home, and it's then I think about the problems"

(Assistant Personnel Manager, Electrical engineering);

"...it is undivided time for forward planning, etcetera - I can do it without interruptions. They're my own fault, for having an 'open door' policy..."

(Personnel Manager, Heavy engineering);

"....I do thinking and planning"

(Personnel Manager, Electronic instruments manuf.).

Yet others used overtime hours to discuss plans and problems, and up-date information with their Managing Director, or others. While nearly all of the interviewees were glad to be free of telephone calls after normal working hours, one personnel manager in a foreign-owned company spent some of his overtime in daily telephone contact with his superiors overseas.

How the respondents' work was generated

The respondents were asked to score, on a 5-point Likert scale, how frequently their work was generated by ten possible sources of work, including 'other'. The question may be seen in Appendix 3, p13, B30. The mean score for each source of work was calculated (weighted Always = 5 to Never = 1). Table 6.6 below shows the frequencies for each source of work, and the mean scores for each are presented in Table 6.7 which follows.

Table 6.6

How the respondents' work was generated

<u>Source of work</u>	<u>Frequencies</u>										<u>N</u>
	<u>Always</u>		<u>Frequ</u>		<u>Occas</u>		<u>Seldom</u>		<u>Never</u>		
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>ently</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>ionally</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
Immediate superior	1	0	66	29	114	51	43	19	1	0	225
Other superior(s)	2	1	27	12	94	43	77	35	20	9	220
Subordinates	6	3	119	53	79	35	12	5	9	4	225
Colleagues	3	1	138	61	67	30	17	8	0	0	225
Telephone calls	9	4	140	61	65	29	14	6	0	0	228
Correspondence	5	2	139	62	70	31	12	5	0	0	226
Meetings	11	5	135	60	70	31	9	4	0	0	225
Casual talks	2	1	44	19	117	52	62	27	1	1	226
Shop stewards/ reps	4	2	78	36	61	28	46	22	26	12	215
Other	0	0	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0	16

Table 6.7

Mean scores for sources of work listed in Table 6.6

<u>Source of work</u>	<u>Mean</u>
Meetings	3.658
Telephone calls	3.632
Correspondence	3.606
Colleagues	3.564
Subordinates	3.449
Immediate superior	3.120
Shop stewards	2.944
Casual discussions	2.925
Other superiors	2.609
Other (N=16)	3.688

The mean scores which are of immediate interest here are those which gained a high response; those of meetings, telephone calls, and correspondence. The mean scores for these sources of work were similar, suggesting that they are of approximately equal importance as generators of personnel specialists' work-loads. Table 6.7 shows that work is a bit more often generated by colleagues and subordinates than by immediate or other superiors.

The category 'other' included a variety of responses from a small number of people: six respondents' work was self-generated,

in that they developed their own ideas; five people mentioned routine/cyclical work, which was an ongoing part of their jobs; two recorded statutory requirements as a source of work; one acted on information received from other firms; one responded to rapid changes within his organization by initiating the personnel action necessary to cope with and implement change; and one reacted frequently to approaches from employees.

Contacts made in the course of the respondents' jobs

This section will consider the contacts which the respondents made in connection with their work, both inside and outside their organizations. In part, this relates to the 'networks' explained in Chapter One, in the context of securing and exchanging information through contact with others. It is also, however, relevant for understanding the main types of contact made in personnel work, which will help with Chapter Eight's discussions of the political aspects of managerial work and personnel's relationships with other management. Further, it will contribute to Chapter Ten, regarding the knowledge used in personnel work.

(a) Contacts within the respondents' organizations

The respondents were asked which functions/departments they had most contact with at work, and were asked to rank a pre-coded list of possible contacts from 1 (most contact) to 6 (least contact). The question may be seen in Appendix 3, p11, B22. In the following discussion of the responses, these 'ranks' will

be designated as ratings. The frequency tables of responses are shown in full in Appendix 2, Table P (1 - 6).

The mean scores for each function/department were calculated (weighted 'most contact' = 6 to 'least contact' = 1), to produce a rank order table, which is presented in Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8

Functions/departments ranked according to the amount of contact reported by the respondents (218)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Function/ Dept.</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
1	Operations (e.g. production, construction, computer)	5.139	201
2	Planning/general management	4.396	194
3	Shop stewards/employee reps.	3.819	177
4	Accounts/Finance	3.769	195
5	Other	3.486	37
6	Sales/Marketing	2.591	142
7	Work Study	2.475	122

Not all of the respondents had contact with all of the functions or departments listed. Even so, Table 6.8 above gives a reasonable indication in ranks 1 to 4 of the relative amounts of contact experienced with these functional areas by 80 - 92% of the respondents who answered this question (218). The mean scores show the relative importance of the various contact departments in terms of the amount of contact with each. The mean for Operations is much higher than the other three of the 'top four' ranks, which themselves are well ahead of the lowest ranks in the table.

The category 'Other' required that the respondents specify the function/department they meant if they scored this category.

Four did not do so. The remaining 33 respondents reported:

Headquarters/divisional/ specialist personnel staff (14); the administrative staff of other departments (8); technical/ engineering departments (non-production) (4); the Chief Executive (2); and single responses in respect of legal, purchasing, safety/fire/medical, miscellaneous, and employees.

Face-to-face contact with employees

The interviewees were asked, "Can you give some indication of the frequency with which you are in face-to-face contact with employees? (in their role as employed persons - not their job roles)". The frequency table for this question is shown in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9

Frequency of face-to-face contact with employees

<u>Frequency of contact</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Daily	59	54
Several times weekly	18	17
Several times monthly	5	5
Variable	2	2
Rarely	24	22
Never	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>109</u>	<u>101</u>

Just over half of the interviewees had daily contact with employees. Some actively sought contact:

"...my role is to get out of this seat"
(Personnel Manager, Legal firm);

"I go into the works every morning. Workers can approach me at any time. I make sure I'm seen..."
(Personnel/IR Mgr., Building Products);

"I walk through the plant daily. My job specification says I have to spend 20% of my time with 'familiarisation'"
(Personnel Mgr., Dutch-owned manuf. company);

"...it's important to know the men in this industry. There are 1850 on site, and I know a large percentage of them"
(Personnel Manager, Coal);

"I believe in contact. You get a better 'feel' for the organization" (Personnel Officer, Biscuit manufacture).

Some interviewees who did not see employees daily said that they were not the first port of call for employee problems, and that line/other management were encouraged to talk to employees who had problems:

"...it's a definite aspect of my job - I'm not in an ivory tower and isolated from employees. I am available, and a good listener - but it is the job of their management to listen, so I insist that they speak to me only after their manager can't help"

(Personnel Manager, Brewery);

"...we want the line manager to be the first approach. I'll do an occasional interview in a stalemate situation"

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications).

Others did not see employees because their subordinate staff did any employee counselling/other interviews:

"...I take walkabouts and speak to people, but at this level I don't see many people, despite an 'open door' policy. I am not the first port of call - that's their own management. Then, my staff operate a filtering policy. I don't deal with non-sticky problems"

(Staff Manager, Coal);

"...we often get problem situations. Junior staff deal more with them than I do. I don't have time, so my involvement in non-critical situations is minimal. I often think I'd be more effective if I got out to branch offices and met the staff - I think I'd get better feedback than I do now"

(Personnel Director, Public Sector);

"...very seldom, personally. My staff do it, and are better at it than me. I only do it on request"

(Personnel Officer, N.H.S.).

For some practitioners, employee contact happened less often than popular conceptions of personnel work would have us believe. Indeed, this is a theme which appeared intermittently

in the interviews, when interviewees would remark on it, while in the course of answering questions which were not related to employee contact:

"...We tell anybody who comes to work in this office, that if they think they are coming in 'to meet people', then forget it! The only people they'll meet are the other staff in the personnel office"

(Personnel Officer, Education);

"Not often. Rarely. I suppose I'm distant. My main contact is in the recruitment situation, or with supervisors - but with actual employees? No. [long pause] That's worrying, isn't it? We deal with their papers"

(Personnel Officer, Telecommunications).

Others, however, felt that at their job levels, relatively little contact with the workforce was almost inevitable:

"...I think that contact with people is one of the clichés about personnel management - you very often have more contact with other sides of the business. My main contact is with senior management"

(Personnel Manager, Textiles).

Level of internal contact

The respondents were asked to specify whether the status of the person they contacted most in each department was higher, lower, or the same as their own. The question appears in Appendix 3, p11, B23. Once the questionnaires were received, an additional code was necessary to accommodate the responses which stated that the level of contact varied, according to circumstance. Table 6.10 below shows the response frequencies for each function/department according to the level of contact in each.

Table 6.10Level of contact with other departments compared to respondent's own status (226)

<u>Function/ Department</u>	<u>Higher</u>		<u>Same</u>		<u>Lower</u>		<u>Varies</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
Operations	69	33	103	50	22	10	14	7	208
Planning/Gen. Mgt	120	58	65	31	12	6	11	5	208
Accounts/Finance	69	33	88	42	46	22	7	3	210
Other	10	28	14	39	10	28	2	5	36
Sales/Marketing	60	40	70	46	16	10	6	4	152
Work Study	11	9	56	44	56	44	3	3	126

With the exception of Work Study, the majority of the respondents reporting against each department were engaged in contact which was with a person who was either of equivalent or higher status. The most prevalent level of contact with Operations departments was with a person of equal status, while with Planning/General management, the contact's status level was normally higher.

The data presented in Table 6.10 contextualise the part of Chapter Eight which considers the interviewees' perceptions of their relationships with other managers, power and influence, credibility, and their own political behaviour.

(b) External contacts

The question about the respondents' contacts external to their own organizations may be seen in Appendix 3, p11, B24. They were asked to specify their external contacts, and rate them from 1 = most contact to 6 = least contact. The responses to this

question may be seen in Appendix Q (1 - 6).

The mean score for each contact description was calculated (weighted Rated 1 = 6 to Rated 6 = 1) to produce a rank order of the contacts reported. Table 6.11 shows the rank order and related means for each of the external contacts.

Table 6.11

Rank order and related means of external contacts

<u>Rank</u>	<u>External contact</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>
1	Other companies in same group	5.462	13
2	Recruitment consultants	5.333	16
3	IPM	5.000	1
4	Recruitment agency	4.811	106
5	Employers' Association	4.699	73
6	Trades Unions	4.583	120
7	Advertising agency	4.417	24
8	Job Centres	4.310	29
9	Training boards	4.292	72
10	Other companies same industry	4.218	28
11	Universities	4.111	18
12	Other companies - not same group or industry	4.026	39
13	PER (Professional & Executive Recruitment)	4.000	1
14	Schools	3.833	24
15	Technical colleges	3.737	24
16	Health & Safety Executive	3.714	49
17	Government departments (DHSS, Dept of Employment)	3.686	118
18	Other	3.539	102
19	Newspapers	3.429	7

Table 6.11 shows a wide range of contacts external to the respondents' organizations. The categories which do not have clear links to the activities of recruitment, training, health and safety, industrial relations, and the fulfilment of statutory requirements are: contacts with educational establishments; contacts with other companies; and 'other'. While the questionnaire responses do not cast any light on the

reasons for the contact with educational establishments, various interviewees indicated that they recruited school-leavers, or that their companies engaged in public relations work in local schools. A few mentioned universities in connection with graduate recruitment, while those who mentioned technical colleges did so in the context of arranging day-release courses for employees, or liaising about work-experience placements for sandwich course students.

Table 6.11 showed that our respondents reported a wide range of external contacts. Daniel and Millward (1983), however, noted that the contacts of their respondents "tended overwhelmingly" to be internal to their own organizations, "rather than people located in any other, wider, network". We shall return to this matter shortly, when we will look at the meetings the interviewees attended which were held outside their establishments.

The category 'Other' with 102 responses, held 19 contact descriptions, which are shown below in Table 6.12 .

Table 6.12

External contacts coded 'Other' (Table 6.11) - frequencies

<u>External contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Sample %</u> (229)
Public relations agency	17	7
Management consultants	13	6
Suppliers of goods/services	12	5
Solicitors/legal advisers	8	4
Insurance companies	7	3
Private health schemes	6	3
Professional bodies	5	2
Chamber of Commerce	4	2
Industrial Society	4	2
Pensions/benefits consultants	4	2
Local authority hygiene depts.	4	2
Catering firms	3	1

Table 6.12 continued

<u>External contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Sample %</u> (229)
Banks and finance companies	3	1
Local personnel group (not IPM)	3	1
Confederation of British Industry	3	1
National/local safety council	2	1
Salary survey organizations	2	1
Travel agency	2	1
Industrial Tribunals Office	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>102</u>	<u>45</u>

Table 6.12 shows a further range of external contacts in which personnel specialists might possibly engage, many of which are connected to the non-personnel duties we saw in Chapter Five.

It does not appear from Tables 6.11 and 6.12 that many of our sample had much to do with management consultants. Mackay and Torrington (1986) and Mackay (1987a) reported the increasing use of consultants, which arose from the need to import expertise, due to a lack of skills in the personnel function. If we are to take this last point as the reason management consultants are used, we might conclude that the respondents to our study had sufficient expertise in-house not to require them. This study, however, did not include a question about the use of consultants inside the respondents' organizations. Thus, all we can say from Tables 6.11 and 6.12 in connection with consultants is that only 10% (24) of our sample had contact with management/recruitment/pensions consultants.

Table 6.11 showed us the external contacts that the respondents had in their jobs. As we have seen in Chapter Five, the composition of their jobs was varied, with different priorities in

each. We can see a similar pattern in Table 6.11 . In order therefore to say something about the external contacts most prevalent within personnel management, the mean score for each external contact was calculated (weighted Rated 1 = 6 to Rated 6 = 1) with the divisor of 229 for the whole sample. The mean scores were ordered to produce the ranks shown in Table 6.13 below.

Table 6.13

Rank order and related mean scores of external contacts
(entire sample)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>External contact</u>	<u>Mean</u>
1	Trades Unions	2.402
2	Recruitment agency	2.227
3	Government departments	1.900
4	Other	1.576
5	Employers' Association	1.498
6	Training boards	1.350
7	Health and Safety Executive	0.794
8	Other companies (not same group/industry)	0.686
9	Technical colleges	0.620
10	Job centres	0.546
11	Other companies same industry	0.515
12	Advertising agency	0.463
13	Schools	0.402
14	Universities	0.323
15	Companies in same group	0.310
16	Newspapers	0.105
17	Recruitment consultants	0.070
18	IPM	0.022
19	PER	0.017

In Chapter Five, there was an emphasis on industrial relations activities, and the same one appears in Table 6.13 , in the placing of Trades Unions in Rank 1. Here however, we have contact with the TU officials, rather than the shop stewards and representatives on site. Recruitment agency contact reflects the high-priority placing of recruitment/selection activities shown in Chapter Five.

Our interest in Tables 6.11, 6.12 and 6.13 lies however, in the external contacts personnel specialists make for the purposes of information-gathering and exchange. The contacts which can readily be identified as sources of information are: government departments; employers' associations; training boards; the Health & Safety Executive and safety councils; other companies; Chambers of Commerce; legal advisers; professional bodies; the Industrial Society; salary survey organizations; consultants in management, recruitment, and pensions/benefits; local personnel groups; and the Confederation of British Industry. Although the IPM was reported by one respondent, his contact was made in connection with his official IPM duties as a regional organiser, and not for information which would enable him to do his job.

Attendance at meetings connected with, but outside of job

The interviewees were asked if they attended any meetings which had some connection with their jobs, but were outside of the normal type of meetings included in their job responsibilities. The response frequencies for this question are shown in Table 6.14 below.

Table 6.14

Main meetings attended outside of job

<u>Type of meeting</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Own group and/or sector personnel mgrs	33	30
Local personnel managers (not IPM)	23	21
For own information/training (e.g BIM)	18	17
Public service (eg industrial tribunals)	8	7
Industrial Society	4	4
Professional bodies (not personnel-related)	3	3
Institute of Personnel Management	3	3
None	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>
Totals	<u>109</u>	<u>101</u>

While 16% (17) of the interviewees did not attend meetings which were not required by their jobs, the remainder engaged in meetings for the purpose of information-gathering and/or exchange. Public service has been included in this description, as the interviewees who were from time to time members of industrial tribunals all said that they learned from the experience, as did one member of a Children's Panel, who felt that it had given him an insight into the problems likely to be encountered by his workforce in their domestic lives.

51% (56) of the interviewees attended meetings with other personnel specialists, outside of the IPM. The function of these meetings was both to make contact with others, and to exchange ideas and information. Within these functions, however, lay another purpose, which concerned the uniformity of, and/or consistency in pay, terms and conditions in 'group' personnel meetings. In sector and local meetings these matters were generally discussed in terms of 'who was doing what', especially where participating companies had trade unions in common, and where employers could experience 'knock-on' union claims as a result of the unilateral action of one company. Personnel managers' meetings therefore, contributed to information about, and the control of, personnel-related matters. These meetings were normally conducted during normal working hours.

A further four categories of meeting in Table 6.14 are also to do with obtaining information, but in the more formal

environment of a speaker addressing a meeting, rather than the free-discussion environments of the personnel managers' meetings mentioned above. These are; the IPM, professional bodies, the Industrial Society, and meetings for the interviewees' own information/training. In this last group, a number of different types of organization were mentioned; the British Institute of Management, the Confederation of British Industry, and Chambers of Commerce. There were also sales presentations from training, recruitment, computer/data processing and other concerns wishing to promote their goods and/or services. The four categories of meeting described above all took place in the interviewees' own time, primarily to enhance their own knowledge, and to give them a wider range of contacts outside of personnel. As one interviewee put it,

"...the informal contact is at least as important as the formal content..."

(Personnel Officer, Education).

As 35% (81) of the sample had IPM membership, we might perhaps have expected a higher frequency for IPM meetings in Table 6.14 . Although the interview schedule did not specifically include a query for IPM members about their attendance at branch meetings, some interviewees gave information about them, in the course of answering a question about IPM membership. While one person wanted to get away from personnel work after hours, the predominant reason for non-attendance was the nature of the meetings, and/or the people who did attend them:

"I had two major objections to IPM meetings - I interpreted a certain group of people as saying "I'm in the lifeboat, so pull up the ladder" - they were all for driving for tougher and tougher examinations....also, I didn't find the meetings satisfactory" (Personnel Mgr, Lighting Manuf.);

"I'm a Fellow of the IPM....I don't want to go to branch meetings and listen to talks on job evaluation. If I couldn't do job evaluation, I shouldn't be in my job. There should be more current topics of mutual interest for practitioners at senior management and director level in the branches and areas...."
(Personnel Director, Food Manuf.);

"...the IPM didn't have meetings that attracted me. I am in the BIM and find their meetings of interest..."
(Personnel Manager, Light Engineering).

The IPM will be discussed further in Chapter Ten.

The importance of Mintzberg's roles in personnel work

Mintzberg (1973) described ten roles which were evident in managerial work, and he grouped these as follows:

<u>Decisional</u>	Disturbance Handler, Entrepreneur, Negotiator, Resource Allocator
<u>Interpersonal</u>	Leader, Liaison, Figurehead
<u>Information processing</u>	Disseminator, Monitor, Spokesman

The ten roles described by Mintzberg were shown by the research findings of Whitely (1978) and Kurke and Aldrich (1979) to be "generally valid" ones for managerial work (Lau and Pavett, 1980). Yukl (1989) felt that all of these roles appeared, to a greater or lesser extent, in all managerial jobs. A manager's level in the hierarchy, however, had "a strong effect" on the extent to which certain managerial roles were required, as had the functional area in which he/she worked (Alexander, 1979). Staff specialists and accountants, for example, required

informational roles to a greater extent than they required other ones (Mintzberg, 1973).

The respondents were asked a question based on Mintzberg's roles which can be seen in Appendix 3, pp22-3, D1. The ten roles were not grouped in any way, and they were presented as 'kinds of work', each accompanied by a short explanation. The respondents were asked to rate the extent they performed each kind of work on a five-point Likert scale, from 'Very important/main feature' to 'Insignificant/totally absent'. The response frequencies for this question may be seen in Appendix 2, Table R (1 - 10).

The mean score for each role was calculated (weighted Very important = 5 to Insignificant = 1), first for the entire sample, and second, for the job levels of Director, Manager, and Officer.

Table 6.15 below shows the mean scores for each role for the sample overall, together with the respective mean scores for Directors, Managers and Officers. The ten roles have been ranked according to their mean scores in Table 6.15 .

Shortly, Table 6.16 will report the rank order of each role for each of the three job levels. For reasons of space, both Table 6.15 and Table 6.17 which appears later have abbreviated role group descriptions: 'Decis' for Decisional; 'Inter' for Interpersonal; and 'Info' for Information processing.

Table 6.15
Mintzberg's roles ranked - mean scores - overall, and
Directors, Managers, Officers

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Role Group</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Officer</u>
1	Disturbance Handler	Decis	4.164	4.125	4.310	3.967
2	Disseminator	Info	3.996	4.125	3.992	3.989
3	Liaison	Inter	3.911	3.625	3.929	3.912
4	Leader	Inter	3.839	4.500	4.111	3.400
5	Monitor	Info	3.659	3.625	3.746	3.629
6	Negotiator	Decis	3.473	4.000	3.913	2.811
7	Spokesman	Info	3.455	3.500	3.5920	3.264
8	Figurehead	Inter	3.408	3.125	3.568	3.211
9	Entrepreneur	Decis	3.350	4.125	3.403	3.209
10	Resource Allocator	Decis	2.964	3.500	3.130	2.692

The rank order of Table 6.15 shows how Mintzberg's roles manifest in personnel work generally, i.e. irrespective of job level, and it confirms much of what the literature review demonstrated about personnel management as managerial work in Chapters One and Two.

The first rank of Disturbance Handler indicates that, in the perceptions of our respondents, personnel work is about handling crises, solving problems, and the reactive fire-fighting described by Crichton (1963). 86% (193) rated the extent of disturbance-handling as the main or important feature of their work, which finds some explanation in the predominance of IR duties shown in Chapter Five.

A high level of interpersonal contact is reflected in ranks 2 to 5, which re-affirm that the skills important to personnel work are largely interpersonal (Tyson, 1980). Ranks 6 to 10 tell us something about the status of personnel in our respondents' organizations. The power to command and commit resources is embodied in the Negotiator and Resource Allocator roles, which were ranked 6 and 10 respectively.

The interpersonal role of Figurehead, which involves performing various duties because of a position of formal authority ranked eighth, ahead of two decisional roles, Entrepreneur (9) and Resource Allocator (10). Personnel work does not emerge, from ranks 6 to 10 inclusive, as being particularly proactive, with the formal authority to commit resources and initiate change.

The position of Entrepreneur in ninth place raises the question of the amount of involvement that the respondents had in the HRM-type of employee management at the time they were surveyed. In the last section of Chapter Two, it was noted that this study was not designed to investigate the existence or otherwise of HRM in the respondents' organizations. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to expect that, if HRM was a strong feature in our respondents' work, it might perhaps have shown up in a markedly higher ranking than 9 out of 10 for the Entrepreneur role, together with a lower emphasis on both disturbance-handling, and trade union-related work.

Mintzberg's ten roles by job level

The mean scores for each role shown in Table 6.15 were ranked

according to job level, to produce the rank order of the ten roles for Directors, Managers and Officers shown in Table 6.16 below.

Table 6.16
Mintzberg's ten roles ranked according to job level

<u>Directors</u>			
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Role group</u>
1	4.500	Leader	Interpersonal
2 (tie)	4.125	Disturbance Handler	Decisional
2 (tie)	4.125	Entrepreneur	Decisional
2 (tie)	4.125	Disseminator	Informational
5	4.000	Negotiator	Decisional
6 (tie)	3.625	Monitor	Informational
6 (tie)	3.625	Liaison	Interpersonal
8 (tie)	3.500	Resource Allocator	Decisional
8 (tie)	3.500	Spokesman	Informational
10	3.125	Figurehead	Interpersonal

<u>Managers</u>			
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Role group</u>
1	4.310	Disturbance Handler	Decisional
2	4.111	Leader	Interpersonal
3	3.992	Disseminator	Informational
4	3.929	Liaison	Interpersonal
5	3.913	Negotiator	Decisional
6	3.746	Monitor	Informational
7	3.592	Spokesman	Informational
8	3.568	Figurehead	Interpersonal
9	3.403	Entrepreneur	Decisional
10	3.130	Resource Allocator	Decisional

<u>Officers</u>			
<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Role group</u>
1	3.989	Disseminator	Informational
2	3.967	Disturbance Handler	Decisional
3	3.912	Liaison	Interpersonal
4	3.629	Monitor	Informational
5	3.400	Leader	Interpersonal
6	3.264	Spokesman	Informational
7	3.211	Figurehead	Interpersonal
8	3.209	Entrepreneur	Decisional
9	2.811	Negotiator	Decisional
10	2.692	Resource Allocator	Decisional

A comparison of the rank order of roles for Directors and Managers showed a substantial measure of agreement ($\rho = +.71$) which was significant at the .05 level (two-tailed test). The

Managers' and Officers' ranks were also positively correlated, with $\rho = + .77$, significant at the .01 level (two-tailed test). The Director and Officer comparison, however, while showing some element of agreement ($\rho = +.43$) did not produce a significant result.

Looking at the mean scores for the respective ranks, the Directors rated the extent of Leader, Resource Allocator, Negotiator, Entrepreneur, and Disseminator roles higher in their work than the Managers and Officers did for theirs.

The Managers performed the roles of Spokesman, Monitor, Figurehead and Disturbance Handler more than the other two job levels. The Managers' mean score for Liaison was only marginally higher than that of the Officers, and higher than that of the Directors.

The Officers exhibited lower mean scores than the Managers for all of the ten roles. The Officers reported higher mean scores than Directors for the Figurehead and Liaison roles, about the same for Monitor, slightly lower for Spokesman, Disturbance Handler, and Disseminator, and substantially lower for Resource Allocator, Leader and Negotiator.

A one-way analysis of variance test for each managerial role according to job level was followed by a Scheffe test for the identification of differences between levels. The results are shown in Table 6.17 below.

Table 6.17Mintzberg's ten roles - comparison between job levels
F-ratio and description of significant differences

<u>Role</u>	<u>Role Group</u>	<u>F-ratio</u>	<u>Groups significantly different at .05 level</u>
Negotiator	Decis	18.9052	Managers and Officers
Leader	Inter	15.1504	Directors and Officers
Resource Allocator	Decis	4.3368	Managers and Officers
Disturbance Handler	Decis	4.2372	Managers and Officers
Figurehead	Inter	3.5908	Managers and Officers
Entrepreneur	Decis	2.5753	None
Spokesman	Info	2.0696	None
Liaison	Inter	0.4765	None
Monitor	Info	0.4637	None
Disseminator	Info	0.4637	None

Significant differences were found in three decisional roles, Negotiator, Resource Allocator and Disturbance Handler; and in two interpersonal ones, Leader and Figurehead. The managers differed from the Officers in each of these five roles. The Leader role was the only one in which the Directors were significantly different, and then only from the Officers.

Mintzberg's three role groups by job level

Mintzberg's ten roles were recoded according to their respective role groups. The mean scores for each role group, by job level, are shown in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18Mintzberg's three role groups - mean scores by job level
and for entire sample

<u>Role Group</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Overall</u>
Decisional	11.813	11.072	9.542	10.473
Interpersonal	11.250	11.616	10.539	11.171
Informational	11.250	11.328	10.888	11.149

Table 6.18 presents a more focussed view of the data which were presented earlier in Table 6.16, in which it was not easily seen which group of roles was most involved at each job level.

In Table 6.18, the 'overall' mean figures show that the interpersonal and informational roles are involved to a greater extent than the decisional roles in personnel work.

The informational roles are the ones in which all three job levels are involved almost equally. Alexander (1979) noted that "no roles are required to a lesser extent as one moves up the hierarchy", which goes some way towards explaining why the Directors and Officers are so similar in the informational results, and not very much different in the interpersonal ones.

While Managers and Directors have a greater involvement in interpersonal roles than the Officers, the work content of Managers includes marginally more exposure to interpersonal roles than is experienced by Directors.

Managers are more involved with Decisional roles than Officers, and Directors have more exposure to this role group than Managers.

Mintzberg (1973) suggested that staff specialists use informational roles to a greater extent than the others. As the sample in this study reported an almost equal involvement with the informational and interpersonal roles in the 'overall' means, the question arises of whether their responses are typical of the personnel occupation generally. This is a matter

which future research may be able to clarify.

Conclusions

While Chapter Five considered the 'what' of the respondents' jobs, their activities and tasks, this chapter has looked at the 'how' of their work. For the sample as a whole, the most time was spent on both formal and informal communication, in formal and informal meetings, correspondence, and telephone calls.

We saw however, that the three job levels of Directors, Managers, and Officers had different emphases in the ways their time was spent. While the Directors incurred a great deal of correspondence and routine paperwork, they also had the greatest amount of time spent on informal meetings and other informal processes of telephone calls and casual talks.

The Managers scored highly on both informal and formal meetings, and on telephone calls. They spent more time on planning than they did on correspondence and routine paperwork. The Officers bore the burden of bureaucratic processes, correspondence, formal meetings, and routine paperwork, but still spent a good deal of their time on telephone calls and informal meetings.

Telephone calls and other interruptions in their work caused all but a few of the interviewees to have lengthy working hours. Work which was contemplative and reflective, or detailed, tended to be done outside normal working hours, and most of the interviewees had developed patterns of overtime working which enabled them to undertake these types of work without interruption.

Most of the interviewees readily identified fragmentation of their working days as a reason for overtime.

The respondents built and maintained both internal and external networks. Their main internal contacts were operational departments and general management. While the level of contact with operational departments was generally at their own level, the contacts made with general management were almost always with managers of higher status.

There was a very wide range of external contacts, which were predominantly used as sources of information. Once again, an emphasis on the industrial relations content of the majority of the respondents' jobs was apparent in the amount of contact with trades union officials. While various sorts of meetings with other personnel specialists were identified as vehicles for information-gathering/exchange, they were found to be also the means of monitoring and/or regulating pay/terms and conditions within sectors of employment, or within local areas. Only a small proportion of the sample reported contact with consultants.

About half of the interviewees did not have regular contact with employees, either through the nature/status of their jobs, or because line management were encouraged to deal with employee questions and problems.

The data about Mintzberg's (1973) roles in managerial work were analysed in two ways. First, according to the ten managerial

roles described by Mintzberg, and second, according to their respective role groups. The first analysis provided data about the way that the ten roles manifested in personnel work generally. It was found to be crisis/problem oriented, with a large degree of interpersonal and informational content, and a much lower involvement in commanding/committing/allocating resources and initiating change.

Thereafter, the ten roles were shown in relation to the job levels of Directors, Managers and Officers, from which we saw the way the different levels of job were conducted in terms of the extent of the ten roles in their work. The major differences lay between Managers and Officers for the three decisional roles of Negotiator, Resource Allocator, and Disturbance Handler, and the interpersonal role of Figurehead. The Directors differed significantly from the Officers in the interpersonal role of Leader. There were five roles however, in which there were no significant differences by level: Monitor, Spokesman and Disseminator (informational); Liaison (interpersonal); and Entrepreneur (decisional).

The analysis of the data by role group showed that the interpersonal and informational roles were of approximately equal importance. The informational roles may be seen as a 'bedrock' of roles in personnel management, which all of the job levels performed almost equally. The Directors and Managers were shown to be more involved in the interpersonal roles than the Officers were. The Officers' greatest involvement was with

informational roles.

The decisional roles achieved the lowest mean scores overall.

The Directors had the greatest involvement with decisional roles. Both the Managers and the Officers had less exposure to decisional roles in their work than they had to informational and interpersonal ones.

Next, we shall look at the ways in which personnel specialists contribute to the management of their organizations..

CHAPTER SEVEN : HOW PERSONNEL SPECIALISTS CONTRIBUTE TO MANAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter looks at personnel specialists as members of management. First, it will consider the respondents' perceptions of the ways in which their work is affected by the philosophies (if any) which are operational in their organizations. Second, it will look at organizational effectiveness, and personnel's contribution to it. Third, it will examine power and influence in personnel work, and the extent to which the sample participated in senior-level decision-making.

The effect of the organization's philosophy on personnel work

Culture was supposedly the most complicated word in the English language (Williams, 1976). Sorge (1985) wrote that culture was commonly defined in three ways: first, in terms of 'high culture', connected with notions of liberal education and 'the arts'; second, as the description which categorised all of the ideas, beliefs and norms of behaviour which characterised a group of people; and third, as organizational culture, which took the second definition and applied it to organizations.

Sorge argued that these concepts of culture were inadequate, as they were too narrow. They did not recognise that 'culture' was an interference with nature: it was a 'cultivated' artificial arrangement. For Sorge, all human life was 'cultured' because of the creative interplay between what occurred naturally, and what was imposed artificially in the form of artefacts:

physical tools and three-dimensional objects; social institutions; and 'mental programmes' of values, ideas, beliefs, behavioural norms, habits, skills and knowledge. The culture of any given group of people included all of these, not just the latter (Sorge, 1985). A broad definition of culture, then, was one which indicated that it included all human artefacts, and not only ways of thinking and acting (Sorge and Warner, 1986).

There has however, been a concentration on organizational culture alone in the literature, which has tended to centre on the attitudes of job-holders and their relationships with each other, more than on their shared tasks (Mant, 1983). The much wider issues raised by Sorge (1985) do not appear to have been taken up elsewhere. Conventional concepts of organizational 'culture' trivialised it, as they glossed over its essence (Sorge).

For Thackray (1986), there was some danger in thinking of culture as something an organization had, rather than what it was. He described some personnel managers, management consultants, journalists and academics as 'culture pedlars' who used the "dangerous assumption" that organizational cultures not only existed, but that they could be influenced by top management.

Morgan (1990) wrote that organizations were above all social constructs which could only be fully understood by considering societal influences. Tyson (1979) pointed to the difficulty of

defining 'organization culture' solely in terms of organization structure, and he suggested that the term "management ideologies" was an easier concept to assimilate, in that it incorporated the social processes and beliefs which created "the sub-cultures where managers operate".

Lawrence (1986) noted how corporate cultures could be functional or dysfunctional, and Armstrong (1987) expanded on this notion, by arguing that:

"Corporate cultures can be strong or weak, and a strong culture is not necessarily a good one: it could be the wrong culture and it could be difficult to change. A weak culture, even a practically non-existent culture, may be acceptable if the organization functions well".

(Armstrong, 1987: 33)

According to Thomas (1985), culture is "elusive", it is learned, it "may well be out of date", and it could act as "a brake on change". Thomas defined organization culture as:

"..something more profound than behaviour, more profound even than 'attitude' and something which makes the members of a given group behave more like each other than non-members".

(Thomas, 1985: 24)

Thomas's last point relates to the 'sub-cultures' referred to by Tyson (1979), and to the group norms of managers which included, inter alia , organizational and personal pride, performance, teamwork, management and supervision, profitability and cost-effectiveness, and planning (cf. Morse, 1976). Organizational and group norms helped to determine whether particular management styles achieved success, or not (Levitt, 1974).

Personnel management was conducted within the established norms

of the 'forum' of the organizational culture, which was "the collective expression of the ideology of senior management" (Tyson and Fell, 1986). This idea has been adopted in this section's use of the term 'philosophy'. Tyson (1979) suggested that an adaptive response was produced when managers' core constructs were "subjected to competing pressures within the organizational setting", with the ultimate effect that personnel specialists were able to merge their values with those of their colleagues.

Their "main chance" of influencing the decision-making process depended on "how the personnel manager approaches the value system of his colleagues" (Tyson and Fell, 1986). He could not "merely be a creature of the local organization culture", however, as new personnel policies could change cultures (Tyson and Fell).

The interviewees were asked if the philosophy of their organizations affected their work. The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 7.1 . The reader is asked to note that in some of the tables in this chapter, and following ones, responses are not shown for the full interview sample (109). Where $N = 96$, this is because the questions which generated those data were added after the 13 pilot interviews had been completed. Some tables have $N = 108$, because one interview was interrupted by a factory fire, and could not be resumed at a later date because of the interviewee's transfer to a post in England.

Table 7.1Personnel work affected by organizational philosophy
Frequency table

<u>Job affected by philosophy?</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes - work within organizational ethos	43	45
Yes - by policies and procedures	13	14
Yes - paternalistic attitude to staff	11	12
Yes - strong man at the top	10	10
Yes - but modify it to local situation	7	7
Yes - 'other' replies	6	6
Not sure of philosophy	4	4
No	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>96</u>	<u>100</u>

94% (90) of the interviewees said that organizational philosophy affected their work in one way or another, and some felt that they had to 'adjust' it to suit local conditions:

"It's bound to. I like to think I'd do it the same way, if I was completely independent. I don't embark on anything to blight the corporate image" (Personnel Mgr., Metal goods);

"...Everyone works to Corporation aims. There is tremendous loyalty and commitment of the Japanese to their company. There is strict adherence to rules, and a rigid viewpoint on interpretation..."
(Personnel Officer, Japanese-owned consumer goods manuf.);

"... It has a merit pay system, which is alien to the UK way of life. Its attitude to sickness and working hours are different. It expects 'company men'...The company's base in the USA is anti-union. We feel that we have a better credibility if we keep a non-union factory here, in line with corporate policy"
(Personnel Mgr., USA-owned mechanical engineering) ;

"...The company recognises that people are important. That is a great asset, working in the personnel environment...we don't have to fight in an organization which is unsympathetic to personnel issues"
(Personnel Mgr., Textiles);

"We are a family company which has been taken over by a large corporation. There are twin influences - an interesting mixture. We preserve the best elements of both. We are creating a company philosophy, in effect"
(Personnel Mgr., Electronic Instruments);

"...there is no doubt about that. The strongest influence of all is the Chief Executive. Personnel policies are 50% initiated by the Chief Executive personally. He is a great force for change"

(Personnel Director, Public Sector).

While the majority of the interviewees identified that their work was influenced/affected by organization philosophy, not all gave it their unqualified approval:

"We have a strong man at the top, and the organizational philosophy comes from him. There is a paternal approach to fringe benefits and perks - on an 'ad hoc' and unstructured basis. This gives rise to inconsistencies in their application..."

(Personnel Manager, Construction);

"It has done. It's a problem to change it..."

(Personnel Manager, Public Sector);

"...I have to put forward the company view - sometimes 'sell' it to the staff, even if I don't wholeheartedly agree with whatever it is..."

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"...I'm always amazed at how the Board brainwashes people like me! They carry on manfully with 'kamikaze' tactics..."

(Asst. I.R. Manager, Coal).

The interviewees who gave 'other' responses, agreed that company/corporate philosophy affected their jobs, but tended to see constraints in this:

"It varies by the day, and it affects trying to cope with the job. An inconsistent approach by management sometimes makes my life difficult"

(Personnel Manager, Insurance).

4% (4) felt that they could not readily identify what the philosophy of their organization was:

"...The organization is weak in overall philosophy, because of its youth...it's difficult not to personalise the philosophy of individual senior managers"

(Personnel Officer, Oil production);

"I'm not sure that our organization has an overall philosophy ...our policy is determined by the Secretary of State. He creates the pressures by which the organization is run"
(Personnel Officer, N.H.S.).

Only 2% (2) interviewees said that their jobs were not affected, and both of them took the line that personnel 'got on with the job':

"We know what our task is, and we do it. People work hard for the company - we're a conscientious bunch..."
(Personnel Officer, Agricultural products).

Where the interviewees stated the type of philosophy which affected their work as one which was prescribed by the organization, their responses tended to centre on profit, efficiency, or the provision of a service within budgetary controls. Those who mentioned policies and procedures did not express these as being part of any wider concept of 'philosophy' governing their organizations.

Where there was a strong Chairman, Managing Director or Chief Executive, this was regarded as an advantage when a pro-personnel company attitude was generated as a result. Some however, experienced difficulty when attempting to promote new initiatives in personnel, or where 'knock-on' effects on pay, benefits or conditions of employment resulted from unilateral action by their top man. While none of the interviewees mentioned here that their 'man at the top' was anti-personnel, we shall see shortly that the attitude(s) of very senior management towards personnel management can be a decisive factor on personnel's role, and in the amount of power/influence which

it is allowed to have.

Organizational effectiveness

Before we look at perceptions of personnel effectiveness, it seems sensible to examine which criteria are used to gauge the overall effectiveness of organizations. In this, and in the effectiveness of personnel's contribution to it, the study did not seek the views of the practitioner sample. Rather, it gathered interview data from 15 senior executives; nine Chief Executives/Managing Directors, and six Board members to whom the top personnel specialist in the organization reported. Although nine of the 15 interviewees' organizations were public sector ones, five of these provided a product/service to make a profit. There were six private company Managing Directors.

Bennett and Langford (1983) felt that, "irrespective of the perspective taken on what managers do or should do, if they are to do anything at all, it must be done effectively". According to Barnard (1938), "an action is effective if it accomplishes its specific aim...it is efficient if it satisfies the motives of that aim, whether it is effective or not". For Drucker (1967), efficiency was "doing things right", while effectiveness was "doing the right things". Mintzberg (1975) felt that a manager's insight into his own work was a significant influence on his effectiveness. Burgoyne and Stuart (1976) however, noted that research had not provided any "universal set of qualities" to describe the effective manager.

The senior executives were asked which criteria they used to

define their organizations' effectiveness. 60% (9) said that the criteria were financial:

"Inevitably financial. We are an international business, and success can be modest - just 'hanging in there'... By financial, I don't necessarily mean a profit"
(Managing Director, Shipping);

"The measure is financial - the return on investment. Performance is measured daily..."
(Managing Director, Paper Products);

"It's not the profit motive - it's service to the community, as cost-effectively as we can do it..."
(General Manager, Public Sector, Lighthouses).

33% (5) reported that performance/results were the criteria for effectiveness:

"We don't try to measure it. Ultimately it's performance - a financial measure, and the achievement of objectives"
(Managing Director, Road Haulage/Storage);

"...the contribution to the corporate function of the whole organization. We interpret the policies and objectives... and translate them into practice. The final judge of our effectiveness is 'Joe Public', when the elections take place"
(Chief Executive, Local Government).

The Managing Director of a surgical supplies company said that service to surgery was a greater priority than shareholder interests in his organization.

80% (12) of the senior executives said that their organizations' objectives were defined by a Board of management, while two had theirs set by Government Departments. Local government objectives were set by the political party currently in power.

According to Boyatzis (1982) the effective performance of a job involved both the specific actions necessary to attain results, and consistency with policies, procedures, and other conditions

imposed by the organizational environment. In a similar vein, Bennett and Langford (1983) wrote that it was "by no means easy" to achieve a consensus view of effectiveness, but it seemed to them that any definition should be goal-oriented;

"...the relationship between what a manager does (performance) and what he is expected to do (purposes or goals), within the constraints imposed by the manager himself, his position, the organization, and the socio-economic environment"

(Bennett and Langford, 1983: 62)

In any event, effectiveness was "not a concrete, tangible, discrete entity" (Bennett and Langford). Burgoyne (1983) noted that while there was some idea that managerial effectiveness was "in principle accessible to measurement", there were no "effective technologies" available to measure it.

Personnel management experienced particular problems in demonstrating effectiveness (cf. Legge and Exley, 1975; Guest and Horwood, 1980; Fowler, 1983; Tyson and Fell, 1986). The success of personnel management depended on the attitude of top management, and their ability to recognise its contribution: personnel managers had to be "measurably seen to contribute" to profitability (Winsbury, 1968). Yet on the other hand, personnel's contribution to the business could be assessed "only by reference to the kind of personnel work the company demands" (Tyson, 1985).

The senior executive interview group were asked which criteria their organizations used to assess the contribution of the personnel department to the overall effectiveness of their

organizations, and whether personnel had any input in defining these.

53% (8) said that personnel was judged on the absence of problems connected with staff/staffing:

"...their biggest contribution is in staff morale - especially with pay and conditions"
(Area Manager, Public Sector Transport);

"...They're very important for ensuring that people operate correctly. If they're tolerably contented, you get good work from people..."
(General Manager, Public Sector, Lighthouses).

47% (6) felt that the most important criterion was personnel's contribution to the management of the organization:

"We measure it by an assessment of the human relations in the business, and by their ability to maintain a high standard of management in an expanding situation"
(Managing Director, Road Haulage/Storage);

"Personnel management is now more than just employing the right people. Their role in an organization of this size has to be, lifting from management the burden of employment legislation - they supplement management"
(Chief Executive, Local Government);

"...The personnel department hasn't got a particular part of the business - it doesn't make, sell, or finance the product - but we use the personnel department and management services to get efficiency..."
(Chief Executive, Public Sector, Power).

73% (11) said that there were no formal arrangements for defining the criteria for personnel effectiveness:

"Personnel is a service department - a good service to management. There's no formal scale of assessment. We know if his service is good or not"
(Managing Director, Distilling);

"We don't assess their contribution. Personnel starts with the MD - and it falls flat if he's not interested. The Personnel Director works with me"
(Managing Director, Surgical supplies);

"There's no formal measure - no pre-set indicators. However, it would be evident if the personnel department was not contributing"

(Secretary, Education).

27% (4) said that their Personnel Director had some say in defining the criteria against which he was assessed. These responses, however, focussed on consultation about set targets and objectives, rather than on any wider input about departmental effectiveness.

80% (12) of the senior executives said that there were no formal arrangements for measuring personnel effectiveness. The local government Chief Executive had tried a formal performance review system, but "it didn't work". Only one Personnel Director had his performance formally reviewed quarterly, but this took the form of the Board assessing the report which he himself had prepared. Two of the senior executives noted that formal assessment was difficult:

"We go by the quality of people, their motivation, and their job satisfaction. It's difficult to measure those in a positive sense, I suppose - but it's very apparent if they're not there"

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports);

"It's most difficult to measure - they're not producing an output, like production managers..."

(Chief Executive, Public Sector, Power).

The senior executives were asked about the extent to which their personnel departments fulfilled the criteria for contributing to organizational effectiveness which they had described earlier as either the absence of staff-related problems, or contribution to the management of the concern. Further, they were asked if

they thought their Personnel Director/head of personnel would agree with that assessment. The frequency table of responses to the first question is shown below, in Table 7.2 .

Table 7.2

Extent to which personnel fulfils criteria for their contribution to organizational objectives

<u>Extent criteria fulfilled</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Very much so	8	53
As well as can be expected	2	13
Difficult to say	2	13
As much as other management	1	7
He does as he's told	1	7
Yes, within remit of the job	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>15</u>	<u>100</u>

53% (8) were very satisfied with the way their personnel departments operated, and saw that they made a positive contribution to organizational goals:

"They give colossal attention and thought to the work. They're very effective. There's an understanding of personnel matters in this organization - we have two ex-personnel officers at the top"

(General Manager, Public Sector, Lighthouses);

"Yes, most certainly - a large measure. It's a very important service for other functions. If we don't get staff matters right, we get all sorts of trouble..."

(Area Manager, Public Sector Transport);

"They're very effective - otherwise, they'd not be here..."

(Managing Director, Surgical supplies);

"They are very effective. If people fall down holes, someone is failing somewhere...Understanding the business is essential to personnel people - they can't perform the function otherwise. Our personnel director is very involved with the business as a whole. He came from an entirely different industry in the private sector, and learned our business in the job here..."

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports).

13% (2) found it difficult to say whether their personnel function met the criteria for contributing to overall

effectiveness:

"....That's a difficult question. It's a moving target..."
(Managing Director, Shipping).

13% (2) felt that their personnel director was doing as well as could be expected, through financial or job restraints:

"By and large, they meet the criteria. There's a 'Catch 22' - they have to match individual career or development objectives with short-term management problems. They largely satisfy both. If you can do that, you've won"
(Chief Executive, Public Sector, Forestry);

"...as well as can be expected within financial constraints. There are subjective judgements about the acceptability of their product. Personnel is probably seen as the most unpopular department - they stifle management demands. They are seen as preventers rather than creators...It is most difficult to judge their effectiveness, as there is no tangible end product"
(Chief Executive, Local government).

The interviewee in education said that his personnel officer fulfilled the remit of her job very well, but she did not deal with a full range of personnel-related matters, as he handled industrial relations, and as training was the responsibility of the academic departments. One Managing Director felt that his personnel manager's activities would always fulfil company objectives, because:

"He does what we ask him to do - he doesn't run anything - he's only a service..."
(Managing Director, Distilling).

Another Managing Director felt that all of his managers contributed towards the 'personnel' element in achieving his organization's objectives, and that the personnel function was "not separate or different" from the others in this.

Only two of the interviewees felt that the top personnel person in their organization might not agree with the opinion they had given about personnel. Both of these related to personnel being excluded in part from what was going on at Board level:

"He'd complain he's not kept in the picture enough..."
(Managing Director, Shipping);

"...in maybe one or two things, he doesn't get involved. He does, in 90% of matters - where contributions from personnel are appropriate"
(Secretary, N.H.S administration).

There was, however, a 'sting in the tail' in the response of the Managing Director of the surgical supplies company, who had already intimated that if the personnel department was not effective, it would not exist. He said that his personnel director would agree that his department was very effective, but "he'd think it's more so".

Johns (1979) pointed to the subjectivity involved in the assessment of effectiveness. In order to obtain assessments that were objective, accurate and consistent, the measurement method used had to be valid, reliable, relevant, standardised and practical (Bennett and Langford, 1983). The senior executive interview sample provided only one case where there was any explicit and formal attempt to assess the effectiveness of the personnel department, and this was done from reports compiled by the personnel director. This director also had his budgets monitored on a monthly basis, and the financial affairs of his department had periodic internal audit inspections.

Fraser (1971) suggested that the success of a personnel

department could be measured in quantitative terms, in labour turnover, absence and sickness rates, unfilled vacancies, training costs, and direct labour costs. Fowler (1983) felt that cost was used as a "primary indicator" of effectiveness due to a confusion between effectiveness and efficiency. While cost said very little on its own, it could be used for monitoring efficiency. Tyson and Fell (1986) similarly related costs, particularly those related to personnel policies, with efficiency; they felt that it might be "helpful" for personnel specialists to have their contribution "established in monetary terms".

Nevertheless, we have seen from the interview data above that, despite a considerable emphasis on financial criteria in connection with organizational effectiveness, cost was not expressed as a major factor in the senior executives' perceptions of personnel effectiveness. Rather, their emphasis was qualitative, justified by their belief that they would soon know if their personnel departments' contributions were deficient.

While 14 from the 15 interviewees had no formal system of measurement for effectiveness, 13 of them seemingly had no difficulty in deciding whether their personnel department fulfilled their organizations' objectives in personnel matters. Indeed, the determining factor in their perceptions was the amount of congruence achieved.

Tyson and Fell (1986) defined the effectiveness of the personnel

function "as the extent to which the members of the personnel department, and the personnel policies give effect to the organization's objectives". It could also be defined as the "adept and persuasive personnel specialist" bringing a "particular model into being, searching for congruity with the organization's expectations".

The senior executives were asked if their personnel departments' objectives were currently consistent with those of their organizations. 67% (10) said that they were always consistent, while 33% (5) said that they were generally consistent, although there had been a few exceptions:

"I think they are. They're sometimes not, if the interests of the department and the interests of the authority don't coincide - but generally they operate in the interests of the Council"

(Chief Executive, Local Government);

"All personnel managers will go off, if they're not given enough to do. Ours goes in the overall right direction. I allow freedom, as long as he's not at right angles to our main objectives - I get him back on stream if he's out of line"

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports).

There was some variety however, in the way the interviewees who said that their personnel department's objectives were always consistent with the organization viewed this:

"If the personnel director is in tune with the organization, he will not put something forward that will be unacceptable or difficult. Certain changes have to be made. A good personnel director will press for them to be put through. He's falling down on the job, if he can't sell something that is for the good of the organization".

(Chief Executive, Public Sector, Power);

"There's not a great deal of trendiness here. We are governed by Civil Service rules and regulations. We have a system of personnel management that has been well tested by the Government - a sledge-hammer to crack a nut!"

(General Manager, Public Sector, Lighthouses);

"Oh, yes. We work as a team together - not in separate compartments..."

(Managing Director, Road Haulage/Storage);

"He's well-controlled..."

(Managing Director, Distilling).

Controls on respondents' jobs

The respondents were shown a list of seven controls which might apply to their jobs, and they were asked to tick all the items which applied to them. The question may be seen in Appendix 3, p.14, B33. Table 7.3 below shows the number of mentions each control received.

Table 7.3

Controls applied to respondents' jobs - number of mentions

<u>Type of control</u>	<u>Number of mentions</u>	<u>% (229)</u>
Work to an agreed set of objectives	168	73
Have project completion dates	152	66
Have annual budget	134	59
Have individual project budgets	68	30
Have few targets set	59	26
No controls are applied	14	6
Other (eg regular reports required)	14	6

Although we have seen from the senior executives' interviews that formal assessments of effectiveness were not widespread, Table 7.3 above shows that only a small proportion of the survey respondents worked without some financial or other controls on their activities. The majority experienced the disciplines of working to an agreed set of objectives, having project completion dates, and working within an annual budget.

The types of control depicted in Table 7.3 however, notionally provide indicators of the efficiency of personnel departments, rather than their effectiveness. If we look at the reported types of control as measures of efficiency, it is worth noting that none of the 'other' responses included the auditing/monitoring of personnel policies, which was "a fruitful way of both demonstrating the value of the personnel role, and of ensuring the functionality of the policies themselves" (Tyson and Fell, (1986).

The importance of demonstrated effectiveness in personnel work

Conceivably, the types of efficiency indicators shown in Table 7.3 above are the sorts of controls which may be experienced by other management in the respondents' organizations. Personnel, however, was not in a "fortunate position" when it came to establishing clear links between their activities and effective performance (cf Legge and Exley, 1975). One interviewee gave a succinct analysis of the type of problems which could be encountered:

"It is a subtle and hidden contribution that we make...we can do an awful lot, but it is not something that can be measured, like an increase in sales. If a department has good results, it only comes as an afterthought that Staff Department found two good new sales staff. I find that irksome..."

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing).

Guest and Horwood (1981) suggested that effectiveness was determined by the background and experience of personnel staff, together with "the nature of the personnel role and the tasks performed" and "the relative power of the personnel function".

Guest and Kenny (1983) felt that the diversity of tasks and knowledge in the personnel occupation and the service role could act as constraints on effectiveness, coupled with the facts that human resources were "less predictable and inevitably more problematic than material resources", and that personnel managers were "often unable to exert as much influence as they would like".

For Tyson and Fell (1986), three levels of effectiveness, each dependent on the other, had to exist before a personnel function would be effective; individual effectiveness, an effective organizational role, and being "seen to contribute to the development of the business". There were three sets of criteria which personnel specialists should satisfy in order to be seen as effective.

First, there were 'Board' ones, where personnel managers should be able to sell themselves to management, have an appreciation of the business, control personnel costs, and create high quality manpower resources. Second, there were those which involved the ability to solve line managers' problems, in which personnel specialists would be judged by the speed and quality of their communications, the accuracy of their advice, their visibility and availability. Third, there were the criteria by which personnel specialists should judge their own effectiveness: their satisfaction of client demands, achievement of specific objectives, involvement in central policy-making, anticipation of client needs, and satisfaction in seeing their

ideas implemented (Tyson and Fell, 1986: 90).

The means used by personnel specialists to 'sell' themselves, and gain credibility will be examined shortly, when we consider aspects of personnel work which are of importance to the question of effectiveness: power and influence, and participation in decision-making.

Power and influence in personnel management

For Pfeffer (1981) power was "a structural phenomenon, created by the division of labour and departmentation" in organizations, and the power of individual departments could, and probably would, change over time. According to Lukes (1974), there were three faces to power: in decision-making, where a group or participant could coerce others into acting against their own interests; in powerful groups keeping items off agendas by defining 'legitimate' [ie their 'own'] subjects; and through the structure of social relationships where no conscious decision was made by powerful groups to suppress issues, but where convention dictated that certain matters were not raised. Pfeffer (1981) felt that power was most effectively used when it was "employed as unobtrusively as possible". Influence was the unobtrusive and acceptable face of power (see Chapter One).

The data about power and influence were obtained from interviews with both personnel specialists and senior executives. Some of the interviewees have been quoted at length, not only for their contribution to the power/influence issue, but also to show the level of political awareness apparent in the interview sample,

a matter of relevance to Chapter Eight.

Perceptions of power and influence in personnel generally

The practitioner interviewees were asked "What power or influence do you think the personnel specialist generally has in organizations?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 7.4 .

Table 7.4

Amount of power and/or influence personnel has generally

<u>Amount of power/influence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Varies with circumstance/type of organization	27	25
Cannot say about the general picture	20	18
Power, where there is a Personnel Director	18	17
Not power - influence by expertise	18	17
Generally, much power and influence	14	13
Not much	10	9
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

The responses were extremely varied. The largest number replied that it was not possible to generalise about the occupation, because of its diversity in practice, and the variety of organizations and circumstances in which personnel specialists could be employed:

"...it depends on the organization structure, and on how the company sees personnel and its role - and on the level of personnel in the organization. It depends on who they report to - if it's the Production Manager, they're not going to have general power. If they report to the Managing Director, which is where the personnel function should, in my opinion, then that organization obviously sees it as a stronger role. But at the end of the day, the influence it has depends on the person who is doing the job - and how relevant and realistic his approach to it [is]"

(Personnel Manager, Public Sector);

"...it depends on the commitment of a company to the personnel function. If they only pay lip-service to it, then there will be no influence at all. If it's accepted as integral to the managerial structure, it will have great influence"

(Personnel Officer, Instruments).

18% (20) felt unable to say anything about personnel elsewhere, because they had always worked for the same employer. The 17% (18) who saw that personnel would have power if it had a Director emphasised that personnel should be seen to have power as well as actually having it, through Board membership.

Equally emphatic that power was not appropriate in personnel work, were the 17% (18) who argued that influence was the correct word to use for personnel. Their accounts focussed on expertise, which bred credibility and respect, which in turn led to a greater ability to influence other management. The extract which follows is typical of this group:

"Power, I'm not sure about. Influence - it depends on the person's credibility. It must be very substantial..."
(Personnel Officer, Tourism).

13% (14) felt that personnel was powerful, and thought it was so because of its involvement in employment legislation and industrial relations.

9% (10) of the interviewees felt that personnel did not have much power or influence in a general sense, and blamed the attitudes of non-personnel managers:

"It's not very large. The presence of a Personnel Director creates an awareness - but your ideas are bounced off by managers. You can influence their views - there's a bigger say in legal aspects and IR..."
(Personnel Manager, Food distribution);

"...generally, very little. The tragedy of British industry is that it has three resources - money, things, and people. People are the most important, yet British management only pay lip-service to that. Their view is that people equate with machines..."
(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing).

Power and influence in the interviewees' organizations

The interviewees were asked how much power and/or influence was evident in their own organizations' personnel functions. The frequency table of responses is shown below, in Table 7.5

Table 7.5

Power and influence in interviewees' organizations

<u>Amount of power/influence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Not power - influence by expertise	32	30
Not power - influence	28	26
Power through Personnel Director	14	13
Effective executive power	13	12
Not much	13	12
Varies according to circumstances	6	5
No power or influence	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

56% (60) of the interviewees felt that they exerted considerable influence through expertise or other means. 25% (27) thought that their personnel department had power, either from the presence of a personnel director on the board, or from the formal management structure, where personnel had equal status with other management:

" We have power in this company. It stems from the Personnel Director's relationship with the Managing Director. We have a voice at the top, and that is important..."
(Personnel Manager, Publishing).

14% (15) felt that little or no power or influence was exerted by personnel in their organizations:

"Very little in local government, and less in this department, due to the lack of emphasis given to it by the Director. I report to a senior administration officer who also had an accounts responsibility. He attends meetings with a personnel content, while I wait here for the decisions to be handed down"
(Departmental Personnel Officer, Local government);

"...some of our managers are very reluctant to accept personnel advice. In fact, the AGM in charge of personnel is reluctant to take our advice - he wants to do his own thing...it's an uphill job. The other AGMs are more prepared to sit down, and listen, and work with personnel"
(Personnel Officer, Oil).

Table 7.5 above shows a stronger emphasis on influence than was apparent in Table 7.4, earlier. Possibly, we are seeing the interviewees' confidence in knowing exactly what happens in their own employment, rather than in the wider world of personnel work outside, which some said they did not know much about.

In the interview extracts which follow, some of the personnel specialists show that they are not too happy with the idea of power per se, while others show an awareness of/use of various forms of political behaviour to secure/maximise/preserve their power and/or their capacity to influence. There is also some indication that personal qualities, rather than structural ones, may be an important factor both in acquiring power, and in influencing others (cf. Kotter, 1977):

" I report to the Operations Manager, and I am the authority . He comes to me for advice and guidance - so, formal power no, influence yes" (Personnel Officer, Oil);

"Quite a lot. I'm happy with it. It's more influence than power - I don't think that personnel should have power...if you have to use power, there's something wrong".
(Personnel Manager, Engineering);

"Now, more than previously - especially with the legislation. It's an unknown area. It is the power of knowledge, and interpretation. I suppose you are quite powerful if you know enough to keep the company out of trouble"
(Personnel Manager, Transport).

There is some indication in this last view that power could

accrue from the ability to reduce uncertainty (Salancik et al., 1978: 241). In the matter of influencing others however,

"...it is almost impossible to have credibility with a blotted copybook"

(Personnel Manager, Brewing).

The interview extracts which follow show an understanding of power acquisition/use and political behaviour in which personality/personal qualities could contribute to the amount of power/influence achieved:

"I have considerable influence, and can mould managers to effective courses of action. It is possible to be 'difficult' if I want to be, and I use my procedural authority in this way on occasions. But I never lose sight of who is paying the salaries. The company's interests have to be paramount. There is a lot of power to be harnessed, and if the personnel manager knows how to use it, he'll be effective"

(Personnel & Admin. Mgr., Oil drilling machinery);

"...if I wasn't taken seriously, I'd leave the job. I wouldn't entertain it if I was put in a cul-de-sac, or had my power eroded by the actions of others"

(Personnel Manager, Retailing);

"As a post, there is very little power, probably none. As a postholder, the power I have is as considerable as I can make it. I do this through my personality, by using my personal contacts with top management, and by exercising my interpersonal skills"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"...influential here. I report to the MD, and I'm part of the executive management team. My successor might not have the same status - when I go, they might re-think the role"

(Personnel Manager, Newspaper Publishing);

"In here, the influence has increased with me in the job. Production managers listen to me. I have a reasonable amount of clout. You make your own job, I find..."

(Personnel & Training Mgr., Clothing Manufacture);

"It depends on your personal skills and attributes. I am a diplomat. There can be a lot of power, and influence, provided the person has the skills to use it properly. Knowing when - and how - to use it, is the main skill"

(Personnel Manager, Drilling Machinery).

Senior executives' perceptions of personnel's power/influence

The fifteen senior executives were asked how much power or influence the personnel department had in their organizations. The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 7.6 .

Table 7.6

Senior executives' perceptions of power and influence

<u>Amount of power/influence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Little power, but a lot of influence	7	47
A lot of power - on the Board	3	20
On the Board, but only some power	3	20
Power within agreed limits	1	7
Power doesn't apply in this company	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>15</u>	<u>101</u>

The responses were equally divided between power and influence, although 27% (4) of the 'power' descriptions were qualified in some way. Only one Managing Director said that power did not feature in the management of his company:

"...you have to think what sort of company we are. We exist because of the people in it...the whole attitude of looking after people in the company starts from the Chairman, down - a bit of a family atmosphere. There's a great importance of people - it's not driven by the Personnel Department"

(Managing Director, Shipping).

The others, however, seemed clear about what power was, and how much their personnel director had:

"If we talk of the principal directors, he's not in the top rank, because it's a service department. He takes part in executive meetings. There are six directors, and the top three - Commercial, Finance, and Engineering - have more power because of their functions"

(Chief Executive, Public Sector, Energy);

"A great deal. He has an equal voice to the other directors. He participates fully in organizational matters. He is consulted by his fellow directors - they get his views. That's the way it should be"

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports).

Although 47% (7) of the personnel directors/departments described by the senior executives had little formal power, their influence was substantial:

"...Power, very little. Influence, quite a lot. Organizations are not run by power. They're run by influence. I persuade - I don't say, "do this"...."
(Managing Director, Road haulage/storage);

"It has influence greater than its proportional numbers - it impinges on all parts of the organization. It has less power because it doesn't have the delegated authority to do more than straightforward things - the real power here is the political power of the elected members. Personnel's greatest power is to say "no". This sometimes operates to the disadvantage of the department..."
(Chief Executive, Local government);

"There's no executive power. They're powerful behind the scenes. It is especially important that Personnel is not seen to have power - they get their power through other managers, mostly"
(Area Manager, Public Sector, Transport).

One of the personnel managers who reported to this Area Manager said of power in his own job:

"I don't have the same power as a line manager...but my decisions affect all of the staff - line management decisions only have local application..."

Senior executives' perceptions of sources of power and influence

The senior executives were asked what was the source of the personnel power or influence they had just described. The frequency table of responses is shown in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7

Sources of power and influence in personnel work

<u>Source of power/influence</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Information and knowledge	9	60
Rules and regulations	3	20
Personal ability to influence	2	13
Not applicable in this company	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>15</u>	<u>100</u>

Once again, the managing director of the shipping company said that the company did not operate a system of power politics. The personnel manager in that company had been interviewed earlier, and his remarks help to explain the managing director's views further:

"...the way the company is set up means that management styles are open, and there is no need to manoeuvre..."

60% (9) attributed their top personnel specialists' power/influence to knowledge and information. There was an emphasis on knowledge about the organization as well as 'professional' knowledge:

"...how the industry works, how the company works, and who the people are, as well as any professional personnel knowledge"

(Managing Director, Paper products);

"...knowledge of the organization, and of the industry - and of the people they are negotiating with. They know what the trades union officers are going to say..."

(Deputy General Manager, Public Sector Aviation);

"We are talking about influence, rather than power. It comes from a sound knowledge of the organization and its needs, and the ability to advise line management of the implications of their decisions....that is not to say the we are like some companies, where the personnel manager is consulted before managers are allowed to make decisions"

(Managing Director, Road Haulage/Storage);

"He gets out to other organizations, and to courses, and knows what goes on in the industry and elsewhere, in the personnel field. It's very much knowledge and information"

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports).

20% (3) of the responses were to do with power deriving from rules and regulations:

"I don't think in terms of their 'clout' being bigger than someone else's. They have a certain amount of power. Power is about making people do what they don't want to do, and the operation of constraints. They have certain formal power to do that, through the rules and regulations, which aim for consistency. It's about not setting precedents"
(General Manager, Public Sector, Lighthouses).

13% (2) of the senior executives felt that personality, and the personal ability to influence/ persuade others were important attributes of their top personnel staff.

Only two of the interviewees said that the organization's formal management structure was the source of personnel's power/influence.

The data in this section have shown that the interviewees perceived power and influence to be different from each other in intent, and in practice. Power was generally described in terms of the formal authority bestowed by Board membership, or where there was not a personnel director, as high-profile membership of a management team. Nevertheless, some personnel managers were explicit about the ways in which they obtained power where they had no formal authority. They used their interpersonal skills, personality, credibility, and their knowledge of their organizations' political environments to secure what some identified as 'clout'.

The idea of power, however, did create some ambivalence in the personnel specialist interviewees. Only 25% (27) saw themselves as having power, while 56% (60) felt that influence was a more appropriate word to use in relation to personnel work. An

underlying theme in the interviews was, how they were seen by others. Their expertise, credibility and track record were perceived as important elements of their ability to influence others. The majority of the senior executives identified knowledge, both professional and organizational, as the main source of their personnel directors'/departments' influence over others.

The personnel contribution to decision-making

Dubin (1962) noted that decision-making was normally a collective process, lengthened by the political need to "accommodate interests". Participants in decision-making shared "tacit understandings", created through communication (Harrison, 1985). The outcomes, decisions, were the result of the balancing of "various power vectors", in which the successful use of power was "a matter of skills rather than just possession" (Pettigrew, 1972).

When faced with complex, unstructured situations, decision-makers reduced decisions into 'sub-decisions', which were factored into "familiar structurable elements" by the application of familiar routines or procedures (Mintzberg et al., 1976). Miner (1973) however, felt that most decisions involved the early establishment of "an implicit favoured alternative", which was then rationalised and supported. Nevertheless, not all decisions were important ones which required the use of power (Pfeffer, 1981).

This section will first look at the senior executives' views

about the extent of their personnel directors'/departments' involvement in senior-level decision-making. The interviewees were asked, "To what extent is the personnel department involved in senior-level decision-making in your company?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 7.8 .

Table 7.8

Extent to which personnel is involved in senior-level decision-making

<u>Involvement</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Considerable, but not at Board level	7	47
Personnel Director on the Board	4	27
Not directly involved, but influences	2	13
Very little - only if asked	1	7
Not involved	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>15</u>	<u>101</u>

There were only two responses where there was little or no input, one in education, and the other in the distillery where the personnel manager's activities were "well controlled" by the Managing Director. 47% (7) of the interviewees reported that although personnel did not have a place on the Board, it had a considerable input to senior-level decisions:

"The personnel manager is at all the management meetings, and he has an input. He has a larger influence in solely personnel-related issues, but he is involved in wider strategic issues at these meetings..."

(Area Manager, Public Sector, Transport);

"...he's very much involved in the wider strategic issues. That's one reason he reports to the Managing Director - I couldn't operate without him..."

(Managing Director, Paper Products);

"The Staff Manager contributes considerably, on the personnel and staffing implications. He's involved at an early stage, sometimes informally. He is briefed early, and then he contributes"

(Managing Director, Shipping).

37% (4) of the responses reported participation at Board level,

although, as in the responses quoted above, there was some variation in the types of decision involved:

"...he's encouraged to be wide-ranging on his Board input - all areas of the business..."

(Managing Director, Surgical supplies);

"He's very involved in company matters generally, and he participates in corporate planning. He knows the organization well, and contributes to its effective management..."

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports);

"The Personnel Director is on the Executive Board, and he just contributes on personnel-related issues..."

(Managing Director, Public Sector, Energy).

Both of the interviewees who said that personnel was not directly involved in senior-level decision-making, but could influence decisions, were in public sector organizations where committees which were dominated by political/lay representatives decided policy.

The personnel specialist interviewees were not asked if they were involved in decision-making at a senior level. Rather, they were asked if they modified senior management decisions in any way, as conceivably this question would provide the opportunity for a range of responses about how they modified decisions before, during, and after the event. Table 7.9 below shows the frequencies for the methods of modifying decisions which were reported by the interviewees.

Table 7.9

How personnel specialists modify managerial decisions

<u>Method of modification</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Through consultation and influence	71	74
Through membership of a management team	11	12
Modify by 'interpretation'	10	10
Do not modify in any way	4	4
Totals	<u>96</u>	<u>100</u>

74% (71) of the interviewees stressed consultation and/or exerting their influence in various ways:

"I keep them on the straight and narrow path. Senior management here still thinks 'hire and fire'...I occasionally have to get them out of a hole if they've made the wrong decision, say, with a dismissal.."
(Assistant Personnel Mgr., Electrical contracting);

"I am responsible to the Deputy Chairman of the Group. This is almost a direct line to God....in general, implications are considered before the final decision is made. I modify [decisions] for the success of the strategic plans of the company. That is what I am here for"
(Personnel Manager, Food, drink and Tobacco);

"...I report to the Managing Director. If I can't make a decision on a personnel matter, then he can't"
(Personnel Manager, Electronic instruments);

"I like to think I do! - both during, and after the event. The Japanese rely heavily on my experience and knowledge of local conditions, and the legislation"
(Personnel Officer, Electronics);

"Yes....I am a screen. I can also influence decisions as they are made. Often decisions evolve..."
(Personnel Officer, N.H.S.).

12% (11) of the accounts centred on the interviewees' active participation as members of management teams, although one manager showed that he could modify decisions later if he wished:

"...as a member of the management team, provided I'd been involved in that process, I wouldn't change the decisions. If I hadn't been involved, I'd interpret them the way I wanted to"
(Personnel Manager, Public Sector, Ports).

Modification of decisions after the event was sometimes conducted openly:

"We have Managing Director edicts here. I modify, and say why. I tailor communications to the audience..."
(Personnel Manager, Electrical components);

"...I'm involved in general decision-making, but I have had to modify after the event. I go back and point out the dangers. I rarely do it on the quiet - I prefer to get it out in the open. They learn the lesson, that way..."

(Personnel and Training Mgr., Machine tools).

Another interviewee who similarly modified decisions, and simultaneously reinforced his position as someone who should have been consulted, sometimes engaged in what Goffman (1952) called "cooling the mark out", by 'saving face':

"... I have an input in the majority of decisions. I can influence. In modification after the event, I go back and put my views for changing it. I remind [my boss] that it would have been easier if I'd been consulted. You have to know your boss. I do a softening, so that it doesn't look like a climb-down....I 'keep face'"

(Personnel Manager, Engineering).

Others modified decisions 'on the quiet':

"Yes, when necessary. Not openly. I take a 'detour' - I 'interpret' decisions..."

(Employee Relations Officer, Vehicle manufacture);

"...corporation-led policies are amended to our own purpose - within limits. Not being caught is important!"

(Personnel Manager, Metal manufacture).

Personnel specialists in American-owned companies had influence locally, but found different ways of coping with corporate policy decisions:

"Yes, but I don't always tell them I've done it...I can also influence decisions...and have fair leeway - but I wouldn't counteract a decision which is clearly in the company's interests, even if I disagree"

(Personnel Mgr., Drilling machinery);

"In local decisions, I influence rather than modify. We try to reach the correct decisions by consultation. I do not modify corporate policies - I may make recommendations, but I cannot initiate change. The corporation aims for consistency world-wide in its policies"

(Personnel Officer, Oil).

The 4% (4) of interviewees who felt that they had no say whatever in decision-making attributed this to their job level. One was the personnel officer in local government who waited for decisions to be "handed down", when modification, or even comment, was "not allowed" by the departmental director.

Means used to influence other management

Honey (1976) felt that personnel managers should adjust their behaviour consciously, so that it would be "appropriate" to the line managers they were with. Further, their credibility with line management depended to a large extent on "being seen to do things well". Personnel had to demonstrate success if it wished to achieve credibility and influence (Legge, 1977).

The personnel specialist interviewees were asked how they 'got their way' in their relationships with other departments, either in policy matters, or in day-to-day managing. In this question, we are looking for the most part, at lateral power, that exhibited across an organization in the relationships between departments (cf. Hickson et al., 1971, 1986). The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 7.10 . It should be noted that the data for this table were drawn from what were in many cases, lengthy narratives, some of which mentioned a mixture of elements. Table 7.10 therefore includes the elements to which the interviewees attached most importance, those which they emphasised as their preferred means of getting their own way.

Table 7.10

How personnel specialists 'get their way' with others

<u>Method</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Reasoned argument/logic	49	45
Persuasion	20	18
Effective track record	19	18
Tailor arguments to the opposition	9	8
Use rank - either own, or boss	5	5
Use any means necessary	2	2
Being helpful	2	2
Other	2	2
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

The method most preferred was the use of a logical argument, which presented information in a reasoned and credible way:

"People in other management disciplines tend to expect Personnel to come along and waffle, and not have a concrete input. Most take account of what the personnel person says if he comes along with a reasoned, prepared, case"
(Personnel Officer, Petrochemicals);

"...I point out weaknesses in their argument, in decision-making. I put my cards on the table, and point out the 'pros' and 'cons'..."
(Personnel and Training Manager, Machine tools);

"...generally, I grind them down - I apply pure reason"
(Personnel Officer, Education);

"We convince them that our case is right, and has benefits. It's not a 'big stick', or a 'carrot'....and we don't always get our own way!"
(Personnel Officer, Carpet manufacture);

"It's nearly always by negotiation and discussion. I work to get support for reasonable ideas. If I don't get it, the potential consequences are firmly outlined to them... reasoned argument usually does it"
(Personnel Officer, Electro-optical equipment).

18% (20) used persuasion:

"...by knowing other managers, and persuading them. Certainly, communication is important. We are not perfect at that, but we do make a special effort, and consult, and sometimes lobby a bit"
(Personnel Manager, Textiles);

"I could hide behind our clearly defined policy manual, but that's a last resort. The general technique of influencing has to be by persuasion..."

(Personnel Director, Food manufacture/catering).

For some of these interviewees, their own personality was seen as an aid to effective persuasion:

"I persuade - by personality, commonsense, and logic. There are precedents which show the inherent risks of not taking our advice..."

(Personnel Officer, Vehicle manufacture);

"...the sheer force of my personality - "We'll do it my way". It requires a sense of humour, and I will use this, where necessary, to my advantage"

(Personnel Manager, Engineering).

18% (19) emphasised their credibility, achieved through previous good contact and/or advice and a track record of effectiveness:

"...it's more than persuasion. It's about track record, and the capability of our suggestions..."

(Personnel Mgr., Metal manufacture);

"...previous effective contact helps.."

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications).

Yukl (1989) felt that it was essential for managers to build a reputation for expertise, which was established by a mixture of showing expertise, and impression management. Others' perceptions of expertise had, however, to be reinforced by logical argument and the presentation of credible evidence before expert power could be exerted. Bucher (1970) saw the ability to be articulate as "a sine qua non of effectiveness in interdepartmental arenas" which could enhance perceived stature beyond that prescribed by the actor's position in the formal organization structure. In order to argue forcefully for an argument, however, the proposer had first to have a firm belief

in it (Bem,1972).

8% (9) used their knowledge of personalities and/or the political situation in connection with personnel activities to ensure a successful outcome of their initiatives with other management:

"...by using my knowledge of management relationships - by knowing which people to approach, when, and how - and by putting the case to them in a way geared to their expected response. I tailor the strategy for best effect"
(Personnel & Administration Mgr., Oil drilling machinery);

"You look at the politics - the whole situation, and what you want to achieve. You gear your approach to the particular managers. Some, you approach directly, and openly persuade. Others, you take the back-door approach with. You assess each situation as it arises"
(Personnel Manager, Construction);

"Normally, by trying to influence them, and fostering relationships with people who will have rapport with your ideas. I foster accessibility, for people to approach me..."
(Personnel Officer, Engineering).

Only 5% (5) mentioned 'pulling rank', either their own or that of their superior. Those who did so viewed it as necessary in difficult situations where the personnel viewpoint had to prevail, for either legal or strategic reasons:

".. I can go to the Managing Director to arbitrate - my way - if the going gets tough"
(Personnel Manager, Engineering).

Only two interviewees felt that their view must succeed always in the face of line management opposition, while another two took the approach of 'being helpful' as a way to both maximise the image of the personnel function, and minimise aggressive tendencies on the part of line management. One of the 'Other'

interviewees, however, said:

"I don't try to get my way. My job is to interpret what management really wants..."
(Personnel Manager, Electronic Instruments).

The interviewees saw their dealings with other management as a test of their interpersonal skills, in which their ability to assess and/or respond to situations relied on their knowledge of their subject and of the other manager(s) involved. Many emphasised their communication skills, and their ability to use their personality to advantage in relationships with other managers. While most of the interviewees seemed to take a fairly open approach in the process of influencing others, there were some who admitted to 'tailoring' their strategy for best effect. An even more covert approach was reported by one manager:

"I sow a seed, and nurture it. I let them think that they have thought it"
(Asst. Personnel Mgr., Electrical contracting).

The interview extracts in this section give us some indication of the adjustments in behaviour which are necessary when negotiating relationships with other managers (cf. Sayles, 1964; Honey, 1976).

Watson (1977) asked his interviewees a similar question about 'getting their way', and he analysed their responses according to the number of approaches mentioned. Although the results for this study were analysed in a different way to Watson's, some areas of comparison are possible. Watson's interviewees placed more emphasis on formal authority, planting ideas, threatening/

bullying than our interviewees, who more often mentioned their effective past performance, expertise, and credibility. The interviewees in this study also placed a greater emphasis on the combined activities of logic and persuasion, which together included working on relationships, than Watson's sample did.

Conclusions

Chapter Seven looked at the ways in which personnel specialists participate in the management of their organizations. It considered how their jobs were influenced by organization culture/philosophy, the extent to which they participated in decision-making, the controls which affected their jobs, and how their effectiveness was assessed. It also examined their perceptions of power and influence in connection with both the personnel occupation and their own employment, and thereafter looked at their participation in decision-making, and the political behaviour they used to 'get their way'.

87% of the interviewees readily identified features of their organizations' philosophies which affected their work. The majority of these expressed this in terms of an organizational ethos, while others reported adherence to policies/procedures, paternalistic attitudes, or the personal philosophy of their Chairman/ Managing Director as the main influencing factors. Some interviewees in foreign-owned multi-national companies admitted to altering/modifying their corporate ethos to suit local conditions.

While the effectiveness of personnel was an issue in connection

with the achievement of organizational objectives, it was generally not subject to formal measurement. Efficiency however, was systematically measured against budgets and project completion dates. The senior executive interviewees viewed the absence of personnel-related problems as the prime indicator of personnel's effectiveness. Any personnel departments which pursued initiatives/projects which diverged from corporate objectives were soon, as one Managing Director put it, brought "back on stream".

On the matters of power and influence, the personnel specialist interviewees were clearer about the situations in their own employment than about the personnel occupation generally. The preference of the majority of interviewees, both senior executives and practitioners, was for influence rather than overt power. For 25% of the specialists, their departments' power derived from having Personnel Directors, or from the heads of the personnel departments being clearly members of management teams.

There was a strong emphasis on credibility, an effective track record, the proven viability of suggestions, and personality in connection with influence. Many of the interviewees also mentioned the use of political skills and personal knowledge to promote their own influence or power.

Nearly all of the interviewees stressed consultation and exerting influence in the process of decision-making. Political behaviour was again evident in the ways in which they

influenced/ modified decisions, both during and after the event. 12% (11) were themselves members of management teams, who felt that their formal involvement in decision-making normally precluded the need to modify and/or 'interpret' policy at some later stage. In the event however, that they had not been fully consulted about a decision which had personnel implications, it would be 'interpreted' to take those into account, if necessary. There was little evidence in the study of personnel involvement in corporate or business strategy formulation.

The most favoured means of personnel specialists 'getting their own way' with other managers were: reasoned argument, persuasion, and credibility. The accounts given by the interviewees showed the types of political behaviour which were used to secure what personnel wanted. These were based on their knowledge both of the politics in the organization and of the other managers involved in particular situations.

In Chapter Eight, we shall take a closer look at our practitioners' political behaviour, and their relationships with other managers.

CHAPTER EIGHT : PERSONNEL AS MANAGEMENT - POLITICS AND AMBIGUITY

Introduction

It was clear from Chapter Seven that many of our interviewees engaged in political behaviour in connection with power and influence, decision-making, and 'getting their way'. This chapter takes a closer look at their political behaviour in their relationships with other managers. Later, it will examine three areas of potential ambiguity in their role as managers: their perceptions of being 'in between' management and employees; whether they see conflict between social justice and efficiency as being inevitable; and whether their membership of trades unions created conflicts of interest in their work. Finally, it will consider their perceptions of stress caused by personnel work, in connection with role ambiguity/conflict.

Relationships with other management

The respondents were asked to choose, from a pre-coded list, the phrase which most aptly described their relationships with other departments in their organizations. This question may be seen in Appendix 3, p24, D6. The frequency table of responses is shown in Table 8.1 below.

Table 8.1Perceptions of relationships with other departments

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Have good rapport/cooperation at all times	42	18
Have good rapport/cooperation the majority of the time	167	73
Have rapport/cooperation only when it suits <u>them</u>	7	3
Have rapport/cooperation when we need it	4	2
Have minimal rapport and cooperation	2	1
Other	1	-
Missing values	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

73% (167) reported that their relationship with other departments was good for the majority of the time, while 18% (42) said that it was good at all times. 6% (13) reported various forms of ambivalence.

Sayles (1964) noted that relationships among managers were "a function of space and time, not two-dimensional surfaces", while Gross (1964) wrote that any problems experienced by personnel in managerial relationships were probably not unique to personnel. Nevertheless, the majority of the responses in Table 8.1 are not about problems and discord. Rather, they focus on the large amount of cooperation and rapport experienced by the respondents. In this, however, we see only one side of the relationship, as the study did not solicit views from line/other management about their relationships with personnel. The results of Table 8.1 should perhaps therefore be viewed with

some caution: French and Henning (1966) noted that personnel managers had different perceptions of their own authority than other managers had of them; and Okinmayowa (1980) wrote that, while personnel managers saw that they contributed actively to organizational success, other managers had "a less impressive view of personnel managers' influence in achieving corporate goals".

The "vast majority" of Watson's (1977) interviewees reported that they generally got on well with other departments, but as one might expect, further questioning revealed that they experienced areas of conflict. A similar situation arose in the study reported here. The respondents were asked, "How do you think other managers in your organization regard personnel people? Your frank and free response is required here. Please write a few words to say what you think".

Watson (1977) had asked his interviewees, "Are there any major conflicts or areas where such conflicts most readily occur?". The question in our study was more open-ended, and possibly less 'leading', in that it did not overtly seek conflict-oriented responses. The respondents were therefore provided with the opportunity to report a range of elements in their relationships with other management.

The responses were indeed frank and free, as requested, and sometimes lengthy. The question appeared to have stirred a hornets' nest. The respondents reported what they appeared to see as real and deep areas of conflict about the issues of

personnel's perceived power, status, and credibility. There was however, a wide range of response, and many of the descriptions held contradictory mixtures of what the respondents saw as favourable and unfavourable elements.

The responses were analysed according to both the number of mentions each description received, and to the favourable/unfavourable emphasis denoted by the respondents. The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.2 .

Table 8.2

Respondents' perceptions of how they are viewed by other management - number of mentions (N = 221)

<u>Viewed unfavourably</u>	<u>Mentions</u>
A necessary evil	54
Restriction/rules/obstacles/pests	35
Suspicious/don't like/critical	26
Ignored/not highly regarded	25
Service/ advisory department only	15
Do not meet organization's needs	10
Role/function not understood	4
Routine administration dept. only	3
'In between' management/employees	3
Welfare/'do-gooders'	2
On employees' side	1
The 'hire and fire' department	1
Distant/remote	1
Total	<u>180</u>
<u>Viewed favourably</u>	
Useful/helpful	86
Trusted/appreciated	33
Professional/high-profile/effective	16
Business oriented/vital to organization	14
Part of management team/on management side	11
Powerful/influential/important	11
Favourable/good	10
Useful for solving IR problems	7
Consistent/fair	5
Good communicators	2
Agent for change/catalyst	2
Total	<u>197</u>

While Table 8.2 shows that more 'favourable' elements were

mentioned by the respondents than unfavourable ones, there were not many more. The distinguishing feature of these data is the ambivalent nature of the responses. We might possibly ask if there is any advantage to practitioners in being useful/helpful, if line management generally view personnel staff as a necessary evil, and as bureaucratic pests who arouse suspicion, who are there to be criticised and eventually ignored, because they work in a service department which does not meet the organization's needs. This interpretation is not unrealistic, when viewed in the context of the questionnaire extracts below, many of which have a 'sting in the tail':

"As interferers in their business. As the people who normally stop them getting their own way!"
(Personnel Officer, Mechanical engineering);

"...A thorn in the flesh"
(Senior Personnel Officer, Amalgamated manuf., USA-owned);

"Interfering do-gooders and schemers..."
(Personnel Manager, Chemicals/man-made fibres);

"...other managers generally slow to praise, and quick to criticise"
(Personnel Manager, Banking/finance/insurance);

"As an expensive luxury - until they get involved with an IR problem they are unable to solve themselves"
(Personnel Officer, Amalgamated manufacturing);

"A necessary evil, and a thankless task"
(Personnel Manager, Paper products, printing, publishing);

"90% a useful source of help and advice. 10% a bloody nuisance"
(Management Development & Training Mgr., Food, drink, tobacco);

"In manufacturing industry you generally find that if the personnel specialist has a 'shopfloor' background, then he is 'respected'. If not, then usually operating managers consider them 'wets'"
(Personnel Manager, Mechanical engineering, USA-owned);

"...lack of understanding of the role of the department, and confusion over where personnel authority ends, and the supervisors' begins"

(Personnel Officer, Amalgamated manufacturing);

"Although we have established (eventually) good working relationships with line management, they do not hesitate to take a dig at the department if someone is not totally positive with the advice given"

(Personnel Controller, Retail distribution);

"Through education, they seem to increasingly understand the role which we play...our problems are often with line management, and not with the workforce itself"

(Personnel Manager, Transport);

"Originally hostile - [they] found disciplinary etc. procedures irritating. After 10 years, I think personnel is now accepted as being both professional and helpful"

(Personnel Director, Public Administration);

"A vital part of the organisation, but suspicious of personnel's perceived 'power'"

(Employee Relations Manager, Office machinery).

In various of these statements, we can see evidence of resentment against personnel's "interference" and "policing activities" (Crichton, 1963), its "unwelcome restraint" (Fowler, 1983), and its impeding and low-impact image (Mushkin and Salter, 1979). There are also some "ogre images" of uncooperative line management (Odiorne, 1967).

Further, the statements give some idea of the "double bind" in which personnel was "caught up":

"On the one hand it can be seen as trapped in a vicious circle, condemning it to perpetual marginality. And, on the other hand, it can be seen as creating conflict with other managers through the power it can wield over them".

(Watson, 1986:204)

These data suggest that personnel work may not be an easy option if line managers do not think of it as an effective, business

-oriented contributor to the achievement of organizational objectives. Further, they provide some insight into why the methods that personnel managers often use to 'get their way' are necessary. The reasons for their political behaviour become clearer with the realisation that they may have to overcome the prejudices of line management before mutually acceptable solutions can be agreed. This last point is especially relevant when we consider what Tyson (1987: 524) wrote about organizations' members' expectations of personnel, which:

"...seem to be crucial, and since the personnel department is part of the symbolic order, there is a heightened consciousness amongst those in contact with the department of the role which they feel is appropriate".

When those 'organization members' are management, rather than employees, another factor comes into play in relationships with personnel. This is the pursuit of "sectional interests" within management teams, which contributed to ambiguity in management, and could also result in political behaviour (Wilmott, 1984).

Personnel involvement in political behaviour

In Chapter Seven, some interviewees identified the behavioural adjustments they made when in contact with other management as 'political' in nature. As one personnel manager in engineering put it,

"Personnel is a minefield, because nobody asks a question to get a straight answer. You have to find out what they really mean. And your answer is remembered".

Mintzberg (1985: 134) felt that political behaviour was "typically divisive and conflictive". According to Kakabadse

(1983), however, it was "impossible to escape the power/political interactions that take place between people at work". In organizations, "dynamic political processes" occurred, mostly with the intention of influencing decisions (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).

While organizations were run by a "series of games", there was no implication that there was "any consensus as to the rules" of play (Crozier and Friedberg, 1980). Managers had to anticipate that "more than one team will be playing in the organization and not find this immoral or upsetting" (Sayles, 1964). Thus, personnel specialists had "to understand the power politics in their organizations if they [were] going to influence events" (Johnston, 1978).

Senior executives' views of personnel's involvement in politics

The senior executive interview group (15) were asked, "Does your personnel department engage in inter-departmental politics?". 47% (7) said 'No', and gave various reasons for this, some of which indicated that political behaviour was viewed as divisive and undesirable:

"No. They have high status, and have direct access to me, and the Chairman - and he's not a politician"
(Managing Director, Road Haulage/storage);

"We're not big enough that wheeler-dealing happens. Personnel wouldn't be involved - we work as a team"
(Production Director, Wire products);

"We experienced politics very much, in the past. You don't forget it in a hurry...it was most unpleasant. To stop it, you have to treat personnel as part of the management team - on every subject..
(Managing Director, Public Sector, Ports);

"No. We don't allow inter-departmental politics as such. We believe in informal lines of communication..."
 (Managing Director, Surgical supplies).

40% (6) said that their personnel departments did engage in political behaviour. Some saw this as almost inevitable, while others felt that it arose from specific circumstances:

"Yes. All the departments do it. They form a series of temporary alliances to secure objectives. They all use their standing with other departments to achieve or prevent things"

(Chief Executive, Local government);

"They get very much involved in the politics of persuasion - taking the longer term view - arguing the case for the development of the man and the organization. It's not status or personal politics. I see them as good honest brokers"

(Chief Executive, Public sector, Forestry).

It was interesting that the managing director of the shipping line, who had earlier denied that power was an issue in his company, said that his personnel department "does inevitably" engage in inter-departmental politics, although he qualified this by saying, "...but it doesn't set out to".

One chief executive felt that political behaviour could be controlled:

"...you have politics where you don't keep people together, and don't have a free information flow. Being secretive stimulates politics. All the departments have my ear"

(Chief Executive, Public sector, Energy).

The managing director of the paper products company found it difficult to say whether politics took place in his company. His personnel manager however, said that while politics were not much in evidence at company level, they were apparent in

dealings with the group of which the company was a part. She felt that politics were most in evidence when the company was initiating personnel policies/activities which the group saw as "undesirable" because they set precedents.

Personnel specialists' use of knowledge/information for political purposes

The interview sample of personnel specialists was asked, "Are you conscious of yourself - or others - using information and knowledge for 'political' means?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.3 .

Table 8.3

Use of knowledge/information for political means

<u>Use of knowledge for politics</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes, for a good outcome	26	27
Yes - it's a fact of life	16	16
Yes - I'm actively involved	14	15
Politics are rarely overt here	14	15
No	24	25
Other	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>96</u>	<u>100</u>

58% (56) gave 'yes' responses, although the amount of their involvement in political behaviour varied: 27% (26) engaged in it to secure a good outcome; 15% (14) were actively involved all of the time, because of the attitudes of their line management towards personnel; and 16% (16) felt that political behaviour was a fact of life, and that all managers engaged in it.

Wilmott (1984) wrote that managerial work research had tended not to depict the political reality of managerial work. In view of the responses we have seen above, it seems sensible to

suggest that if researchers ask specific questions about political behaviour, the deficiency noted by Wilmott will be remedied. Indeed, Stewart (1983) has argued along broadly similar lines.

The interview extracts which follow show that the personnel specialists who said that they engaged in organizational politics, and used knowledge/information to do so, knew precisely what the nature of their involvement was, to the extent that they manipulated people and events to get what they wanted:

"Of course! Anyone who denies it - well! People who succeed are politically successful and competent at their job. To be merely competent will not lead to success..."
(Personnel Officer, Electronics);

"Always - you manipulate people to get what you want..."
(Employee Relations Officer, Vehicle manufacture);

"Every organization is a jungle. No-one has not got information they can use in a political sense. That includes personnel..."
(Personnel Manager, Food, drink and tobacco);

"You have to read memos. about each other in the context of what you know about the relationships between managers. You don't get it from organization charts. I have this priceless information in my head, and use it daily"
(Personnel & Administration Mgr., Oil drilling machinery);

"I try to inhibit decisions by influence - especially when senior management want to do something crazy. I'm not always successful, but there are ways and means of doing it. Uniquely, personnel managers can influence decisions other than internally. I can influence the trades unions to a course of action - now that's politics!"
(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"There are inevitable inter-departmental power struggles... There are personal alliances with directors...we don't use information to further these alliances, but let's say we can be more helpful to departments we favour, than ones which are difficult"
(Personnel Officer, Food, drink, tobacco);

"...there is divisional rivalry. People take the view of their division. Also, they tend to be specialists. They are medical professionals, not managers. This affects the way they run their affairs..."

(Personnel Officer, N.H.S.);

"...There is 'managerial' use of information..."

(Personnel Officer, Carpet manufacture).

Some interviewees mentioned areas of their jobs where they were more likely to engage in political behaviour:

"Yes. I use it in recruitment, in proposing people for posts. I use my knowledge of the people, and the departments to get suitable placements..."

(Personnel Officer, Gas);

"...to a medium extent, on pay, and structural management development"

(Personnel Officer, Finance);

"...Information can be used in ways it wasn't designed for. Take manpower statistics for example - politics show in their interpretation..."

(Employee Relations Manager, Metal manufacture).

There was some evidence that political behaviour took place inside personnel departments:

"...there is points-scoring - also within the personnel department, with and against colleagues...It is a continuous process..." (Personnel Officer, Oil);

"There's always a bit of that. I am a sounding-board. Confidences are given to me, and I give advice to fit the situation. I do 'politicking' subconsciously, and consciously, especially in my relationships with others - and with my superior [the personnel director]"

(Personnel Manager, Pharmaceuticals);

"Very much. Even within the personnel department - my own staff - especially that bugger out there! People seek advice 'unofficially' before making a move - to my mind, that's politics"

(Personnel Manager, Newspaper publishing).

Two interviewees felt that credibility held political advantage:

"Oh yes - everyone must do, to an extent. How honest they'd be in admitting it, I don't know. It's not keeping things secret, to give yourself the edge. It's using knowledge and information responsibly, to build up your credibility in the eyes of other management"

(Training Officer, Energy);

"I use it for advantage internally. If I can prove that I'm up-to-date, and know about new technology etcetera, that gives me greater credibility with line management"

(Training Manager, Metal manufacture).

One interviewee stated the political advantages of being seen to be useful:

"...Personnel is unusually vulnerable to being ignored, but it has a high level of access to the holders of power. Some management resent this. If a personnel manager does not establish a credible operation, he'll suffer, and be rejected. You'll be ignored if you're doing things that people don't find useful"

(Personnel Director, Public Sector Development).

Some interviewees were the sole personnel representatives in their organizations, and felt that the size of the enterprise, and/or the way it was managed did not provide much scope for political activity:

"Yes I do, but the management style here is fairly autocratic. We have a strong Chairman who makes the major decisions - so politicking at lower levels is fairly futile..."

(Personnel Manager, Construction);

"No, not here. In my previous company - yes. This is a private company...there is no challenging of power"

(Personnel Manager, Retailing).

Others, however, felt that political behaviour was not appropriate in personnel work:

"...people do play company politics. I would say that in personnel, one should steer clear of politics, and just play it straight"

(Personnel Manager, Public Sector, Ports);

"...I have made a clear decision not to use knowledge to accrue power"
 (Personnel Manager, Electronic Instruments);

"...if anyone does, in personnel, they are a danger to themselves, their organization, and the job they are doing"
 (Personnel Officer, Defence technology).

A noticeable feature of the interviews was the level of awareness of political behaviour which was shown by the sample, regardless of whether or not they classed themselves as participants in interdepartmental politics. Those who admitted to engaging in politics said that they did so to secure the success of their departments' policies, ideas and strategies. Both credibility and being useful could be used as political tools. Small organization size, and/or the strength of top management had some bearing on whether political behaviour was evident, or even possible. There seemed to be a greater emphasis on team-work and cooperation in smaller concerns, both in the personnel specialists' and the senior executives' interviews.

Personnel specialists as management - ambiguities

This section examines three areas of potential ambiguity in personnel specialists' role as management. These are: whether practitioners perceive themselves to be 'in between' management and employees; whether they see any conflict between an organization's efficiency, and being just/fair to employees; and whether those who are trades union members experience a conflict of interests in the course of their managerial work.

a) Personnel management - 'in between'?

The issue of whether personnel management is in between management and employees is connected both to ambiguity in the occupation, and to notions of the personnel role, matters which were discussed in Chapter Two.

The personnel specialist interviewees were asked, "Some argue that the personnel manager is 'in between' management and the employees. Do you agree with this idea of the job?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.4 .

Table 8.4

Personnel specialists' perceptions of being 'in between'

<u>Do you agree that you are 'in between'?</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
No - am management/on management side	63	58
Sometimes	9	8
Yes - in the middle/buffer/mediator	31	28
Other	5	5
No - am on employees' side	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>109</u>	<u>100</u>

58% (63) of the interviewees felt that they were management, and the majority of them expressed their views in an emphatic and spirited way:

"No! No way! A personnel manager is not functioning properly if he doesn't see himself as part of the management team..."

(Personnel Manager, Engineering);

"Certainly not! I'm clearly part of the management team. I'm not a management shop-steward and employee conciliator"

(Personnel Manager, Foods/catering);

"No - it's a fallacy. He's part of the organization. Some people like to kid themselves on..."

(Training Officer, Furniture manufacture);

"There is no doubt - I am part of management. I advise before they jump, where to jump..."

(Personnel Manager, Pharmaceuticals);

"No, I don't...the company pays the salary, and it gets first loyalty. We are not a buffer"

(Assistant Personnel Manager, Electrical contracting);

"...I've never had the old role of being welfare; the referee; keeping the peace; the arbiter - when the crunch comes, I know which side I am on"

(Personnel Director, Public Sector, Development);

"...if he is perceived by employees as being 'in between', he'll be pulled from pillar to post. It is sometimes expedient to take the middle ground - but it's not the best place!"

(Personnel & Administration Mgr., Oil drilling machinery);

"No. It's a subtle trap to take that role. You'll lose your influence on the management side. You always have to be seen as a member of management - and know who your master is"

(Assistant IR Manager, Coal);

"We are the advisers and executors of policy, and part of the management team - not conciliators. That has to be understood by all"

(Personnel Manager, Metal manufacture).

28% (31) thought that they did have a middle-ground/buffer/mediator approach to their work. This was explained in terms of improving management-employee relationships and/or channels of communication, either as the result of a poor organizational climate historically, or because of their personal belief that personnel should be approachable by both 'sides' of the employment relationship:

"...I feel that I act as a buffer. Communication here has been a problem. I act as a link..."

(Personnel Manager, Retailing);

"Yes. It is irksome and objectionable to have the conciliatory role. It's not where I want to be. However, I have to have the trust of both sides. Too frequently, people try to put me 'in between'. Just because it happens, doesn't mean that it's right"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"...I'm a 'go-between, and communication link"

(Personnel Officer, Whisky blending/bottling plant);

"I often have to represent both sides. I put the 'personnel' view to management, and then put the 'management' view to the staff"
(Personnel Officer, Insurance);

"Yes, I do. He's the meat in the sandwich. You err on the staff side, or err on the management side, depending on the situation"

(Personnel Manager, Legal firm);

"I think I have to agree, regrettably. I'd like to say it shouldn't be the case. I'm trying to eradicate that aspect here..."

(Personnel Manager, Brewing/Public houses).

8% (9) said that, on occasions, personnel was 'in the middle'. They explained that this was necessary when management had done/ were about to do something which was contrary to the interests of employees, or which might cause future problems. It is worth noting however, that these interviewees saw their mediating role as a temporary and expedient measure, and not as their normal work situation:

"On certain occasions, yes. Through lack of communication from management, when we are placed as the 'go-between', getting facts, and rectifying situations"

(Personnel Manager, Hotels, catering and leisure);

"Sometimes it has to be. For example, I have to step in and veto management, and suggest alternatives..."

(Personnel Officer, Furniture manufacture);

"...basically, the personnel function is very much directed by management. The middle ground comes when you look for the balance between what management wants, and what is really achievable realistically...so there is an element of being in the middle. The staff, I must say, see personnel as very much part of management..."

(Assistant Staff Manager, Banking);

"...We have a very few managers who don't consider employees when making decisions. I have battles with those individuals more frequently than I have with the majority of our managers. It is usually seen as interfering, because it's none of my bloody business....They're not all they might be in people-management, and have to be straightened out..."

(Training and Development Manager, Transport).

This manager felt that the "problem managers" forced him into a mediating role at times. He added, however,

"...I see personnel working closely with managers - not 'in between...we've got the balance right. If managers have to come to personnel before they can breathe, it's totally unrealistic...".

The 'other' responses were received from interviewees whose jobs were 'central staffs' or policy-making ones, which did not involve (as they saw it) the management/employee interface:

"I can see why some people feel like that. In central personnel, we're different. We influence policy. Line personnel management has a harder time..."
(Training Officer, Local government).

One personnel specialist felt that he favoured employees:

"...I tend to be on the employees' side - it's 40% management, 60% employees. It's just the way I am, especially when dealing with hard-line managers who want to screw blokes into the ground..."
(Personnel Officer, Construction).

The results shown in Table 8.4 are almost the reverse of those reported by Watson (1977: 175/7). The question was identical in both studies. Watson felt that the wording of the question "inevitably influenced the type of response", and he found it "interesting...that two-thirds of [his] respondents gave accounts which suggested that the function was 'in between' and that they did not disapprove of this fact or suggested that the function *ought* to be in between in this way". Most of his sample willingly saw themselves as 'in the middle', which Watson thought was "something of a contradiction", as "a central aspiration" of personnel specialists was "to achieve credibility as members of the 'management team'".

For Watson, the apparent contradiction was explained by personnel managers preserving the appearance of neutrality, which served as a means of contributing to organizational goals. In this, they presented objectivity/neutrality to employees, and acted as a channel of communication for managers. In comparison, 28% (31) of this study's interviewees said they were 'in the middle', and as their interview extracts show, some felt strongly opposed to the idea, and wished to change their position, while some others felt that they had little alternative because of the historical background of management/employee relations in their organizations.

Six (6%) of Watson's interviewees were "equivocal" in their replies. This tendency was not apparent in our interviewees, who forthrightly stated their position, whatever it was. Those who were 'in between' occasionally, were placed in that situation largely because of the behaviour or decisions of other management. For those interviewees, being 'in the middle' was a temporary expedient, a form of containment strategy, to minimise the effects of others' actions.

Watson reported that 27% of his respondents "were concerned to reject the 'in between' notion...sometimes quite strongly". In this study, 58% (63) felt that they were members of management, and we have seen from their interview extracts some indication of the strength of their replies. These were given immediately and spontaneously, without any of the hesitancy or pause for reflection which was generally evident in the questions about

power/influence, and the relevance of the behavioural sciences to personnel work.

The composition of the interview sample for this study was broadly similar to that of Watson's, in terms of backgrounds and gender. Looking elsewhere for some explanation of the dissimilar results, there are four factors which severally, or in combination may account for them. First, we saw in Chapter Five that industrial relations was an important element in most of our respondents' jobs. Watson (1977) related some of his own experience in industrial relations, where "one always stressed that in the long run one was bound by management's decisions". It is possible therefore, that incumbents of jobs with a substantial industrial relations content will see themselves more clearly as 'management' than those whose jobs contain a greater emphasis on other personnel activities. It should be said here, however, that strong 'managerial' responses were received also from people whose involvement in industrial relations was negligible/nil.

Second, it could be that the timing of this study's interviews (spring/summer 1985) may have some bearing on the responses. It is possible that during the period of recession, personnel work was more 'managerial' in its relationships with the workforce in private companies. This point will be pursued further shortly, when we consider personnel specialists' views about the compatibility of justice and efficiency in their work. Mackay (1986) noted that in 1984, the majority of her interviewees

showed tendencies towards being more aggressive and "bullish", with a "harder and more confident" management approach, which led to the finding that "the macho manager is alive and kicking in a surprisingly large number of organizations". As one of the interviewees in our study put it:

"...I identify readily as a management individual, especially in a good economic climate. Now the back is to the wall economically, management has hardened...management has become more obvious"

(Personnel manager, Food distribution).

The third possibility relates to the information our interviewees gave us about their relationships with other management. Their capacity to influence other management relied on their credibility, which they explained in terms of an effective track record and the viability of their advice. It is possible therefore, that the position of 'man in the middle' might detract from their credibility with line/other management (cf. Crichton, 1963; Fox, 1966a). We can surmise that personnel specialists will be better able to project themselves as members of management teams if their role is entirely consistent with that membership, and is not an ambivalent one.

The fourth possibility is that, in the period between Watson's (1977) study and this one, the number of personnel specialists who were members of management teams had increased, and that the "central aspiration" described by Watson in the mid-1970s had become more of a reality for many personnel practitioners in the course of the next decade.

b) The 'justice v. efficiency' source of ambiguity

This section is about the 'justice/fairness v. efficiency' argument, which was outlined in Chapter Two. It is to do with the notion that there is a conflict of interests between labour and capital (cf. Watson, 1977; Wilmott 1984). It also considers the view that the aim of personnel management is to achieve both efficiency and justice (IPM, 1963).

The interviewees were asked a question which was similar to one which Watson (1977) asked his sample; "Some people argue that there is an inevitable conflict between an organization being efficient on the one hand and being just and fair to its employees on the other. How do you feel about this?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.5 .

Table 8.5

Interviewees' perceptions of justice and efficiency

<u>Description</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Conflict not inevitable - they go together	32	29
Conflict not inevitable - fairness leads to efficiency	24	22
See potential for conflict - we strike a balance	20	18
Don't see any conflict	15	14
See conflict	13	12
Sometimes cannot reconcile the two	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals	<u>109</u>	<u>100</u>

The majority of the 29% (32) who said that justice and efficiency go together, emphasised efficiency. For some, the central argument was organizational survival, and that efficiency kept people in work, and facilitated the payment of benefits. Others saw that efficiency coupled with injustice was not good business sense, while yet another group thought that their organizations were normally both fair and efficient:

"...the reality is that what is good for the company is good ultimately for the workforce. If you are profitable, you are able to return to those who are generating the profits: good salaries; good conditions; job opportunities; and guaranteed employment. If you are inefficient, and more than fair to your workforce, you may in fact disadvantage them. It is not fair to cosset people. Companies which do that go to the wall"

(Personnel and Senior IR Officer, Brewing);

"...our job is to be fair to the organization first, and then to the people. You can't survive without efficiency. Closure and redundancy is unfair to 1500 people - so it's 'good for the greatest mass'..."

(Personnel Manager, Mechanical engineering);

"It is an expensive view that organizations should buffer individuals from economic sanctions like redundancy..."

(Employee Relations Manager, Metal manufacture);

"...what is important is that although redundancy is nominally unfair on the staff it affects, it is necessary to ensure the jobs of the staff retained. It is not healthy if personnel defends the individual who is to be made redundant..."

(Personnel Officer, Agricultural products);

"It is important to have control, and be fair at the same time. We couple control and compassion. There's nothing that gives personnel a bad name quicker than someone dithering on the side of the employee, because it's the kinder thing to do, rather than actually being the correct thing to do"

(Personnel Officer, Oil exploration);

"...personnel management is part of management, which should be just and fair - not meaning 'kind'. Management make the company as efficient as possible. Providing jobs efficiently is just and fair..."

(Personnel Manager, Electro-optical equipment);

"That's a difficult one. I hope that the two go together. In personnel management, one ought to strive for that - I feel that is what we are here for"

(Personnel Officer, Chemicals).

22% (24) felt that justice/fairness bred efficiency:

"...you've got to be fair, honest, consistent and reasonable. ...It is less efficient to have a disgruntled workforce. However, to run the business efficiently, you don't take the soft options..."

(Personnel Officer, Synthetic pigments & plastics);

"...you've got to be fair and reasonable, otherwise people won't work for you. I don't mean give everything they ask..."

(Personnel Officer, Electronics).

18% (20) saw some potential for conflict, but felt that it could be contained by striking a balance between fairness and efficiency; the conflict could be mitigated by compromise:

"...it's a question of compromise. The pendulum swings one way, and then another..."

(Assistant Area Personnel Officer, Health Board);

"You have to strike a balance - we're not here to be just and fair alone. It's life - you accept it"

(Training Officer, Furniture manufacture).

Other interviewees in this group felt that the justice/fairness element of the 'balance' took place in the context of ensuring an efficient, viable organization:

"I agree, but you have to minimise the conflict. I am of the view that the company is efficient first. It is better to be lean, fit, and efficient - keeping 100 people in jobs, rather than have 200 in work for three months, and we are all out of a job....it is really a matter of balance..."

(Personnel Manager, Construction).

14% (15) of the interviewees did not see that there was any conflict involved in the employment relationship. Many of these accounts were strongly expressed, and they centred on organizational survival through efficiency, and effective management:

"Rubbish! If a company is not profitable, then there are no jobs. If management can't manage, then people are made redundant. Redundancy and unemployment is hardly fair, or just..."

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"Absolute nonsense! This company is a fair employer, profitable and efficient..."

(Personnel Officer, Defence electronics);

"...I don't see a conflict between justice or fairness, and being efficient. We are all employees - including the Directors. If the company is in trouble, we are all in trouble" (Personnel Officer, Electro-optical equipment);

"I believe this: at the end of the day, shareholders are only satisfied with a reasonable return from investment. Profit is what you're in business for - of necessity, that does not always take the needs of people into account..."
(Personnel Manager, Electrical components).

12% (13) saw different degrees of conflict, variously resulting from specific matters such as working practices, the availability of resources, the actions of line managers, or the unwillingness of employees to accept/understand managerial decisions/actions:

"Yes, I agree. We have to take the two sides into consideration - especially in engineering, which is often subject to demarcation..."
(Personnel and Training Manager, Machine tools);

"There's definitely a conflict there. The company is here to make a profit and retain jobs - that's more important than being fair to an individual. It's the greatest good for the greatest number. It's an injustice to be inefficient and put the whole workforce on the dole..."
(Personnel Officer, Carpet manufacture);

"There's got to be a conflict - especially where cash is a problem..."
(Personnel Officer, Education);

"There's always conflict...I've seen unfairness in this industry and spoken out against it..."
(Personnel Officer, Road Haulage).

Some of these interviewees however, added a sour note in their analysis of the justice/efficiency argument:

"...Most organizations like to think that they are tolerant of social justice. The extent to which they are prepared to put their money where their mouth is, when there is economic crisis? - I think social justice would come low in their order of priorities"
(Senior Industrial Relations Officer, Local government);

"...the firm must pursue its own objectives, and if this rubs up against an individual's objectives, then the individual will have to adjust or depart..."

(Personnel Officer, Stockbroking).

5% (5) said that it was not always possible to reconcile fairness and efficiency:

"There are always conflict situations where the two are not always reconcileable...however, we shouldn't shrink from the occasions when the view has to be one-way"

(Personnel Officer, Oil Production).

Only one person said that employee interests should sometimes be put before cost-effectiveness. This was the personnel officer who felt that he was 'on the employees' side' because of line managers' attitudes towards staff:

"...employees are assets as much as machinery...To treat loyal servants unfairly sticks in my throat. I don't know how other personnel people feel about that"

(Personnel Officer, Construction).

Overall, 65% (71) of the interviewees did not see conflict between justice/fairness and efficiency, or felt that if it was possible in theory, it was not inevitable in practice. 55% of Watson's respondents did not believe that conflict was inevitable, although 14 of those saw conflict arising in practice.

45% of Watson's sample felt that conflict was inevitable, of whom 18 said that they had to "keep a balance". 18% (20) of this study's interviewees thought that a balance had to be achieved, while 17% (18) felt that there was a conflict between justice/fairness and efficiency. The majority of those, however, saw conflict not as a permanent state of affairs; rather,

it arose from specific circumstances or managerial/employee attitudes and/or actions.

We saw earlier in this chapter that our interviewees were more 'managerialist' than Watson's sample in connection with the possibility of being 'in between'. Once again, in the responses reported above about justice/fairness and efficiency, there is a strong managerialist emphasis in our study, almost always related to the issue of efficiency for economic survival.

Throughout, there has been evidence of a 'hard-nosed' approach where the organization has to come first, even though this might result in unfairness or injustice for some parts of the labour force. We have seen a strong awareness of what is necessary to make organizations 'healthy', cost-effective, profitable, lean and fit. For many, this meant redundancy programmes, unjust to those whose employment was terminated, but justifiable on the grounds of 'good for the greatest number'.

Many accounts indicated that personnel should not 'cosset' or 'buffer' employees from economic reality, that it should not take the 'soft option', 'dither on the side of the employee', 'give everything they ask', or be 'kind'. There was evidence also that being just and fair was seen as instrumental for the achievement of efficiency, because dissatisfied employees "won't work for you". There is therefore, some support for Watson's (1977) view that personnel specialists were "forced to be concerned" with employee welfare or social justice, and employed a "lesser of two evils" strategy to prevent the disruption of

progress towards organizational objectives.

A few interviewees were openly welfare-oriented in their views, but their responses related to challenging instances of injustice, rather than their active promotion of justice/fairness as an ongoing feature of their work. The views of the majority of the sample, however, are best summarised in the words of one; that, "we're not here to be just and fair alone".

Indeed, if we look at the practical world of management which our personnel specialists were reporting, one of private sector recession and reduced budgets in the public sector, we might possibly ask whether a more welfare-oriented approach would have been at all realistic. Many of the interview extracts have shown that the participants saw their priorities in terms of saving jobs, including in some cases, their own.

Tyson and Fell (1986) wrote that personnel specialists walked a "tightrope" in view of the competing values in their jobs. It would appear from this sample's responses for both the 'in between' and the 'justice v. efficiency' questions, that the majority of our practitioners had both feet firmly on management ground, or otherwise perceived the 'tightrope' to be so low that they were able to step on and off it at will, to suit the circumstances.

c) The trade union membership source of ambiguity

Jenkins (1977) suggested that upper management frequently saw

managerial unionism as a conspiracy, and as incorrect behaviour for managers. Farnham (1977) wrote that the growth of union membership among middle management was a result of their insecurity and the growth of unemployment in managerial ranks since the 1970s. Farnham's feeling was that the attitudes of top management towards managerial unionism gave "more cause for pessimism than optimism".

Jenkins (1977) saw managerial collective action as inevitable, and he called managerial union members "reluctant militants", as had Hartmann (1974). Hill (1981) felt that non-manual union members had "to weigh the instrumental advantages of unionism against their own moral objections and the loss of prestige they will experience as unionists". Hill noted that union densities were high in central and local government, teaching and banking.

A major problem for managers who were union members, however, was that:

"[they] face conflicts between their managerial and union loyalties which they need to handle with care and discretion, avoiding the distrust of fellow union members, whilst fulfilling their management responsibilities"

(Arthurs, 1983: 17).

While union membership by managers was more prevalent in the public sector, managers in the private sector were more reluctant to join trades unions because of the possibility of conflicts of interest (Farnham, 1977). Shackleton and Davies (1976) however, found that the personnel managers in their study were more pro-union than the other managers studied, and that personnel was the occupational group with most union members.

Earlier in this chapter, we saw that the majority of the interviewees regarded themselves as members of management. There might therefore be some conflict of interests arising in their work if they are also union members.

The questionnaire respondents to this study were asked if they were currently trade union members. The questions relating to this, and other aspects of union membership may be seen in Appendix 3, pp4 - 5, A9.1 to A9.5 .

20% (46) were members of trades unions, and 74% (34) of those were employed in the public sector. While 87% (40) of the union members reported that their unions had full negotiating rights, one reported that his union was in process of obtaining these, and five (11%) were members of unions which were not recognised by their employers.

The respondents who answered that they were not currently in a union were asked whether they had ever been in one. 41% (75) of this group (183) had once been in a union. They were asked why they were no longer in a union. The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.6 .

Table 8.6Reasons why former union members resigned their membership
(respondents)

<u>Reason for resignation from TU</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Left employment/sector/specialism to which membership applied	46	61
Came to personnel from another job and didn't think membership appropriate	12	16
Was promoted within personnel, and didn't think membership appropriate to level of new job	6	8
Job grade above TU coverage level	4	5
Disagreed with union policy	2	3
Other reasons	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>75</u>	<u>100</u>

The most prevalent reason for resigning union membership was a change of job out of the employment/sector covered by the union. 24% (18) terminated their membership because they felt it was inappropriate, either for personnel work, or for the level of their job in personnel. None of the 'other' respondents specified their reasons for leaving their unions. Two respondents disagreed with union policy, and left.

The interview sample, which included respondents and non-respondents, was asked about union membership. 20% (22) were union members (109). 13 of the interviewees who were not union members at the time of the interviews had formerly been in unions. These were 5 respondents and 8 non-respondents, and their reasons for leaving their unions are shown in Table 8.7 below.

Table 8.7Reasons why former union members resigned their membership
(interviewees)

<u>Reason for resignation from TU</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Disagreed with union policy	5	38
Felt personnel job was incompatible with TU membership	4	31
Job grade of promoted post above TU coverage	3	23
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
Totals	<u>13</u>	<u>100</u>

Tables 8.6 and 8.7 tell us two things which are of consequence to the following discussion about trades union membership and conflicts of interest with personnel work. First, they do not show clear links between the main reasons for leaving membership and a perceived conflict of interest about that membership. Second, fewer than a third of the former TU members stated openly that they felt their union membership was incompatible with personnel work.

Neither the questionnaire nor the interview schedule addressed a question to the non-union members about the reason(s) why they were not/had never been in a union. Despite this, some volunteered information:

"As a general comment, I don't think personnel managers should be in a trade union. Divided loyalties arise"
(Personnel Manager, Electrical components);

and one personnel manager in mechanical engineering noted on his questionnaire that, "Managers should not be in trade unions".

This point was pursued during his interview, when he remarked:

"I was a union member as an engineer. Not as a manager... that would give rise to a conflict of interests generally. There is a division of thought necessary to be in a union, and be a manager at the same time".

The respondent union members were asked if they ever felt that any conflicts of interests arose in their work as a result of their union membership. The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 8.8 .

Table 8.8

Respondent TU members - experience of conflicts of interests

<u>Conflicts of interests arise:</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Never	12	27
Rarely	19	41
From time to time	13	28
Frequently	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	<u>46</u>	<u>100</u>

It would appear that the respondents who were union members experienced little difficulty in reconciling the demands of their jobs with their union membership, as 41% (19) found a conflict of interests a rare occurrence in their work, while 27% (12) did not experience it at all. Only 4% (2) noted that they were frequently faced with conflicts of interest in their jobs, while for 28% (13) such occasions arose 'from time to time'.

The interview sample of TU members, however, presented a different dimension to the story depicted in Table 8.8 . They had been asked if they could give examples of conflicts of interest arising in their work. The frequency table of responses is shown in Table 8.9 below.

Table 8.9Interviewees' examples of conflicts of interest arising from their membership of trades unions

<u>Cause of conflicts of interest</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
TU-related issues covered by job	7	32
Undertake work which is contrary to TU beliefs	7	32
Have to negotiate with own TU representatives	5	23
Cannot divulge information to TU	2	9
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	<u>22</u>	<u>100</u>

The main reasons for experiencing conflicts of interest were that some personnel work related to matters which were subject to union negotiation/consultation agreements, and that aspects of the work such as manpower control, wages/salaries policies, and redundancy were contrary to the interviewees' union beliefs.

Negotiation presented particular problems for some:

"Management are in the SOGAT Chapter. So am I. I have to negotiate, and I feel 'pig in the middle'. It is a very difficult and uncomfortable situation, concerning people I have known in a lifetime's work..."
(Personnel Manager, Newspaper Publishing);

"...I just have to separate the two out..."
(Personnel Officer, Education).

Industrial action was also a source of difficulty:

"...In the situation of a walk-out, for instance, they have to be interviewed by us, and disciplined, and that creates a conflict"
(Personnel Officer, Gas);

"The union took industrial action a few years ago, which I supported in principle - so I had to wear two hats. I still attended work, and it was difficult to strike a balance. Acting as a trade union member, and acting as a manager, you'd do different things....my first allegiance is to the company as personnel manager"
(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"...in a management position, I cannot support it"
 (Training Manager, Metal Manufacture).

One personnel Officer in the N.H.S., who had been a member of NALGO for thirty years, stated that he had recently "had to be quite strong" in speaking against industrial action, both as a union member and as a manager. He did not think that he "could put the union before the job".

One personnel manager, who had expressed criticism of his management colleagues throughout the interview, was angered on occasions:

"...where I have to give a public reason for a decision, and I know that the reason is because of bad management. That creates a conflict ...as a trade unionist, it grates when the real reason is incompetence..."
 (Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing).

Policy matters sometimes created a conflict:

"...I can't always line up the union view with the needs of the organization"
 (Training Officer, Public Sector, Energy).

One personnel officer in education paid a union subscription "because I don't want to ride on the back of the union", but did not attend union meetings as a matter of principle. A personnel manager in a private retailing company which had a "strong" managing director, however, did attend union meetings, at some risk to her employment:

"...this is a non-union company. I use my views to guide people to a course of action. I occasionally attend meetings, and know the union view. My employers must not know that I am in a union, as I'd probably lose my job".

It was clear from the interviewees' accounts that, no matter

how rarely conflicts of interest arose in their work, each instance prompted feelings of discomfort caused by divided loyalties. Nevertheless, the interviewees unanimously continued to act in their capacity as managers.

Role ambiguity and stress in personnel work

Role ambiguity and role conflict have been shown to be major sources of managerial stress by various writers (cf. Kahn et al., 1964; French and Caplan, 1970; Beishon and Palmer, 1972; Margolis et al., 1974; Giles, 1987). According to Robertson and Cooper (1983), stress was "a regressive and counter-productive condition", which produced "extreme and usually undifferentiated anxiety". The outcomes of stress were inevitably negative.

The interviewees in our study were asked, "Would you describe personnel management as a stressful occupation?". The question was framed thus, so that they would not feel required to admit/deny that stress affected them personally. Nevertheless, most replied in terms of their personal experience. Their responses are shown below in Table 8.10 .

Table 8.10

Perceptions of stress in personnel work

<u>Stress experienced</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes - constantly stressed	13	12
Yes - all personnel work is stressful	18	17
Yes - interpersonal content of the work	7	6
Yes - time/workload pressures	16	15
Yes, but not more than other mgt. here	8	7
Yes - infrequently	29	27
No	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

84% (91) said that they experienced stress in the course of their work, although there was some variation in the amounts and causes of stress reported. 29% (27) felt that stress arose infrequently, usually prompted by specific circumstances:

"Yes, on occasions it's very stressful. Especially with redundancy - dealing with the people. I must try not to get emotionally involved..."

(Personnel Officer, Multi-product manufacture);

"...underground deaths - advising the relatives. The personal problems of the men...Disciplinary cases, and dismissals - condemning a man and his family to the dole queue for life"

(Colliery Personnel Manager, Coal);

"...for me, it's redundancy situations"

(Personnel Manager, Textiles);

"Yes, parts of it. IR more than job evaluation, say..."

(Employee Relations Manager, Metal manufacture).

17% (18) thought that all personnel work was stressful:

"Yes, it's a stressful occupation. It affects everyone in different ways, as they're influenced by local events; for example, redundancies or financial problems"

(Personnel Manager, Miscellaneous consumer goods);

"...stress in personnel is caused by not knowing what is round the corner"

(Recruitment and Training Manager, Television broadcasting);

"Reluctantly, yes. It's a lonely occupation. If it's done the right way, it's very stressful..."

(Personnel Manager, Whisky production/bottling).

16% (17) felt that personnel work was not stressful and/or they never experienced stress. In this, most thought that personality was an important factor in feeling stressed:

"No. I find it enjoyable - but it depends on the individual..."

(Personnel Officer, Agricultural products);

"...stress is relative. People themselves create stress. It depends on the individual people, and how they respond to pressure..."

(Personnel Manager, Legal firm).

We shall return to this 'stress-free' group later in this section.

15% (16) were stressed by pressures created by time and/or their workloads:

"...in many instances, the personnel specialist is called in at the eleventh hour, and has a short time to acquaint himself with what has happened, what should have happened, and how to get from one to the other"

(Senior IR Officer, Local government);

"...time pressures - and the work is ongoing, unremitting, and 'bitty'"

(Personnel Officer, Local government);

"Yes, my job is stressful. It's the variety in the job, the many different involvements. Time pressures, workload, external sources outwith your control - it's keeping all the balls in the air at the one time..."

(Personnel and Admin. Mgr, Oil drilling machinery).

12% (13) said that they felt more or less under constant stress, and for some this affected their lives outside work:

"Yes...I've had cardiographs for angina. I'm faced head-on with stress..."

(Personnel Manager, Consumer/Building products);

"...you are at the coal-face. Lots of us worry, and take the worries home. It is stressful, making the right decision, and giving the right advice"

(Personnel Manager, Pharmaceuticals);

"...at times I go home feeling neurotic. It's an ulcer job. I work on my nerves"

(Assistant Personnel Manager, Electrical contracting).

7% (8) thought that their jobs were not any more stressful than other managerial jobs in their organizations:

"Yes. At my level, all managers have equal stress, no matter what their department is"

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"...if you are in a stressful organization, it is difficult for everybody. All the jobs here are equally stressful. I'd not find it easy to look around for a soft option"
(Personnel Director, Public sector development);

"...stress is self-induced. Attempting the impossible is stressful. I have equal stress to other staff functions. General management is more stressful..."
(Personnel Director, Food manufacture/catering).

6% (7) attributed their experiences of stress to the interpersonal content of their work:

"...people and their feelings are volatile. You have to be right in your handling of them"
(Personnel Officer, Defence electronics);

"...in dealing with people, you have to get it right first time. You are a front man, and can't hide your mistakes"
(Personnel Officer, Stockbroking);

"...stress equals dealing with people"
(Personnel Manager, Construction).

Table 8.10 shows that there was a range of 'yes' responses. In those interviews, IR received 19 mentions as a stress factor, and redundancy and/or dismissals were mentioned nine times. It was apparent from the narratives however, that it was the face-to-face element of these matters which created stress. In a similar vein, a few interviewees also mentioned recruitment interviews and/or presenting training courses:

"...if I'm running training courses, I'm nervous before I speak. It's exhausting to present courses, and I 'crash out' afterwards..."
(Personnel Manager, Brewing).

While the data reported in Table 8.10, and in the interview extracts, tell us quite a lot about stressors in personnel work, they do not point clearly to personnel-specific role ambiguity as a major source of stress. Arguably, they tell us more about

personnel work, and the ways in which our sample responded to/ were affected by it.

It is worth noting that the interview scripts for this question were all brief, which may indicate that the sample was not too happy about expanding on a subject which obviously affected some of them quite strongly. Pressures of time/workload, being "exposed", "in the public eye", the "front man", dealing with people face-to-face, and having to make correct decisions quickly were each reported as stressors.

It might have been possible to identify redundancy interviews and IR negotiations with role ambiguity/conflict, if the practitioners who were acting in a 'managerialist' role generally felt that they should have been in a more caring/ benevolent and/or 'in between' one. This however, was not the case. From 29 mentions of negotiations/redundancy interviews, 24 (83%) held similar opinions about being 'in between' as this personnel manager in construction:

"...I am very clear about my own role, which is to further the objectives of the company. I'm not here to represent the staff, or to act on their behalf, or to mediate for them. I am not at all confused about that. I am on the side of management".

Moreover, the five remaining interviewees in this group were not committed 'middlemen'. Three acted as go-betweens and/or communication links because of a history of poor employee relations in their organizations, and two were 'in between' only when other management made mistakes or 'bad' decisions.

It was shown in Table 8.4 that forty interviewees felt they were 'in between', although nine of those experienced this only occasionally. Additionally, there was one personnel officer who felt that he was 'on the employees' side'. The stressors reported by these 41 interviewees are shown below in Table 8.11.

Table 8.11
Stressors reported by the 'in between' group

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Time/workload pressures	14	34
The 'people' element of the work	10	24
Specific infrequent problems	2	5
Own emotional involvement with work	1	2
Not more stressed than other mgt.	1	2
Not stressed by personnel work	<u>13</u>	<u>32</u>
Totals	<u>41</u>	<u>99</u>

None of these interviewees specifically mentioned their 'in between' role as a source of stress. Time/workload pressures stressed 34% (14) of this group, and 32% (13) did not feel stressed by their work. When we compare these two results with those reported in Table 8.10, two interesting points arise.

First, our 'middlemen' account for 88% (14) of the time/workload pressures result in Table 8.10 (16); and second, they represent 76% (13) of the group who did not feel stressed by their work (17). There is a paradox in this, for the group who reported time/workload pressures invariably did so in terms of feeling very stressed by their work; yet, on the other hand, we have a group who said they were not stressed. Why is it then, that nearly all of these two divergent response groups are 'in between'?

Looking at the 'not stressed' group first; four were due to

retire in five years' time, four were temporary placements in personnel, and five said that their personalities/attitudes to work precluded stress. It would appear that these factors might have more bearing on their stress-free status than the 'in between' role as such. Perhaps people feel less pressure to 'perform' if they will be leaving a job in the foreseeable future, or are experienced in the work and/or are not ambitious, or "worriers".

The time/workload-stressed interviewees however, all envisaged that in five years' time they would be in personnel work, at the same level or higher. Eight of this group felt that stress arose because of the volume of work they had, which was difficult to complete by set deadlines. Six others had the same problem(s), but their accounts referred to the actions and/or attitudes of other management as contributory factors:

"...if [their] demands are excessive..."

(District Staff Manager, Coal);

"...they all want to see you now, and expect to see you now, and think you should be available"

(Personnel Manager, Newspaper publishing);

"...you have to have all the facts at your fingertips, or you fall down - there's doubt about your credibility..."

(Personnel Officer, Oil exploration).

As 88% of all the interviewees who were stressed by time/workload pressures were also 'in between', it seems reasonable to ask two questions: first, does taking a 'middleman' role generate workload by trying to accommodate both 'sides' of the employment relationship?; and second, does the 'in between' personnel specialist, perhaps conscious that other management

perceive him/her thus, feel obliged to accept excessive workloads and tight deadlines in order to achieve credibility?

These are lines of enquiry which might possibly interest other personnel researchers. Our study did not collect the types of data necessary to answer these points satisfactorily.

Nevertheless, from the data which were obtained, the link between role ambiguity and stress seems clearer for the time/workload group than it was for the 'managerialist' one.

24% (10) of the 'in between' interviewees said that they found the 'people' element of personnel work stressful, and their replies centred on their apprehension about dealing with people face to face, especially where employees/others were angry, or where there was a threat of disruption if the practitioner did not say or do the right thing. Half of this group were nervous when required to address others, at (variously) interviews, negotiating/other meetings, and training courses. The question which must be asked about the 'people element' group is; did their stress stem from their ambiguous 'in between' role as personnel staff in face to face contact with others - or would it have arisen for them in any face to face encounter in any other occupation? The evidence from the interview scripts falls in favour of the latter point. Put bluntly, these interviewees did not much like the parts of the work which required direct communication; they did not find it easy to do, and thus felt stressed.

When researchers ask people about stress, they must also bear in

mind that their line of questioning may not generate objective responses. Moreover, as one personnel specialist observed, "stress is relative". The face to face element of the work, which generated apprehension and nervousness in the group just discussed, was found to be "challenging", "interesting", "rewarding", and "satisfying" by various other practitioners.

While this report has looked for evidence of stress resulting from the types of personnel-specific role ambiguity discussed in Chapter Two, it has found some difficulty in doing so conclusively. Yet, we have seen that work-related stress was experienced by the majority of our interviewees, who were also predominantly managerialist in outlook. Perhaps then, if there is a link to be found between role ambiguity and stress, it may lie in the ambiguities described in Chapter Two which were not occupation-specific; the ones which were inherent in management itself (cf. Sayles, 1964; Watson, 1977; Farnham, 1984; Wilmott, 1984).

Conclusions

This chapter has examined our personnel specialists' relationships with other managers, and the political behaviour they used to manipulate those relationships. It has also considered their views about aspects of their work which have been identified in literature about personnel management as sources of ambiguity in their role as managers, and whether role ambiguity/conflict was a source of stress in their jobs.

While relationships with other managers were generally reported

as being good, there was a strong element of ambivalence in connection with practitioners' views of what line management felt about personnel. There was a wide variety of unfavourable views expressed. From these, it was evident that the range of political behaviour reported by the sample was necessary in part to secure personnel's aims in the face of negative attitudes held by other management. The interviewees readily identified their own political behaviour, and many who engaged in it expressed clearly what it involved, and how they manipulated people, events and information to their own/personnel's advantage. They were indeed the manipulative decision-makers described by Ritzer and Trice (1969, 1970).

There was strong resistance to the notions that personnel specialists are 'in between' management and employees, and that they are employed to ensure just/fair treatment for employees. The responses in connection with both of these ideas were openly managerialist and 'hard-nosed', to the extent that the few welfare-oriented views which did emerge seemed oddly out of place. The results therefore concur with the finding of Mackay and Torrington (1986), that "the role of the personnel person as 'in between' seems to have gone".

At the time of interview, spring/summer 1985, the main consideration for many of the study's participants was the measures which had to be taken to ensure their organizations' survival. Their commitment to the achievement of this objective in order that their employers could weather the difficulties

caused by recession, and hopefully generate growth, increased productivity and profit in the future, suggests that the managerialist model outlined by Miner and Miner (1976) is an appropriate one for our survey participants.

Perhaps it was not surprising that our sample took a strong line about their role as management. We saw in Chapters Four and Five that they were, for the most part, involved in personnel work at the 'sharp-end', with industrial relations a major feature of work for most of them. While their work could be challenging, their exposure as 'front men' could be stressful, in other aspects of personnel management as well as in industrial relations. Personnel was described as "a lonely occupation", and doing the work or certain aspects of it created various degrees of stress for 84% (91) of the interview sample.

Those practitioners who were union members experienced some conflicts of interest because they saw themselves as 'management', and not as mediators, conciliators or buffers.

Even though the sample held predominantly managerialist views, another theme emerged in the course of Chapters Seven and Eight which might, at face value, present a kind of contradiction to managerialism. This was the interviewees' emphasis on professionalism. For this sample, the term 'professional' had the lay person's connotations of doing their jobs well, and being seen to do them well, and there was a strong element of instrumentalism in this which hinged on credibility. The interviewees exhibited the task-centred approach which Tyson and

Fell (1986) felt was the embodiment of the 'professional ethic'.

Credibility enhanced their ability to influence others, and to participate in decision-making in a proactive way. For many, their competence and expertise was a source of political 'clout' which they used to advantage, especially when other management made mistakes. Personnel's use of knowledge and expertise was seen as a major source of power and/or influence by the senior executive interviewees. For this interview group, organizational/sector-specific knowledge was as important as any 'professional' knowledge personnel might have.

Thurley (1981) wrote that personnel managers used professionalism "in an instrumental fashion" because they were "caught in a mismatch between a pretentious abstract model of human resource management and the reality of a fragmented set of activities carried out with little recognition of their value by other managers". While the results in this chapter, and in Chapter Seven, have shown that personnel specialists do use their 'professional' credibility in their relationships with other managers, it is questionable whether they do so in order to mitigate the 'mismatch' between a theoretical model of personnel management, and what was expected of them by other management.

Rather, it appears from the interview data that their professionalism furthered entirely practical situation-specific ends. These involved helping other management to consider the

personnel implications of their decisions, often to prevent 'bad' decisions which could have a detrimental effect on labour relations, or which could leave the employer open to legal action. In this, the protection of employer interests, rather than the promotion of personnel policies/procedures and/or theory for their own sake, came through strongly in the interviews.

The specialists in this study have shown us that they have shaken off the idea that they should be fairer and more 'caring' than other managers. Instead, they have presented evidence that other managers require education in personnel matters, and need to recognise that personnel management is part of all managerial jobs. Indeed, the resistance of other managers to this idea has been a feature of the interview data in this chapter and the previous one. It is apparent from the data that other managers' refusal to recognise that personnel work is an integral part of management gives personnel specialists a high first hurdle to jump before they can proceed with whatever task they have in hand.

In Chapters Seven and Eight, we have seen that various forms of knowledge were mentioned in connection with power and influence, credibility, and the ability of personnel specialists to influence decision-making and get their own way in their relationships with other management. Chapter Nine will look at how this knowledge is obtained, how it is updated, and what kinds of training our sample received.

CHAPTER NINE : HOW PERSONNEL-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE
IS ACCUMULATED

"Knowledge is peculiar. It has the special quality of enriching those who receive it without impoverishing or diminishing those who give it away"

(Levitt, 1989 : 8)

Introduction

This chapter will look at data about the knowledge which our sample brought to their personnel jobs, and whether they consider their current knowledge to be industry/sector specific. It will then consider the means used by the respondents to update their 'professional' knowledge, and the place that formal training has in this process.

Knowledge brought to personnel work

It was shown in Chapter Four that 31% of this study's respondents were 'initial choosers', and that the others had entered personnel from a diverse range of occupations. The interviewees were asked, "Thinking back to your first job in personnel, what sources of knowledge (both practical and academic) did you bring to the job? The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 9.1 .

Table 9.1

Knowledge brought to personnel work

<u>Type(s) of knowledge</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Company/other previous work experience	59	62
Very little, learned 'on the job'	30	31
Own attitude towards personnel work	4	4
Academic knowledge	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>96</u>	<u>100</u>

62% (59) felt that their previous experience in other work or in the same organization was the most important source of knowledge

in their first personnel job:

"...I was an ex-convenor of shop stewards, in the trade union. This gave me a 'plus' in industrial relations - I spoke their language"

(Personnel Manager, Electrical components);

"I am an engineer by training. My first job was recruiting technicians. I could talk to them. I wouldn't say that my Services background was particularly relevant"

(Personnel Manager, Transport);

"...engineering was not a disadvantage. It was a positive advantage in terms of a systematic approach to problem-solving"

(Personnel Director, Food manufacture/catering);

"...personality, production experience, and a liking for people. I wasn't trained to do personnel work"

(Personnel Manager, Finance);

"Ten years' work experience doing something else! There was a lot of factual knowledge that had to be acquired fairly quickly - but one operates within a tight framework with a lot of central support in this organization - it was a case of getting on the 'phone to learn how to deal with something"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing).

Previous experience, however, had to be supplemented by learning personnel work in the course of the job:

"I had wide experience of administration and personnel matters - not as a specialist, as a line manager. I learnt the finer aspects of personnel management while doing the job"

(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"...a fair general knowledge of the business. I had plenty of contacts, and I knew where to get information. I also had staff reporting to me who knew the job, so I learnt it as I went along"

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"I served a five-year apprenticeship, in all departments. I had maturity as a person, and knowledge of the organization. I learned by doing. Nobody teaches the practical skills of being a personnel manager"

(Personnel Manager, Whisky production).

31% (30) said that they could not identify bringing very much to their first personnel job, and that they learned by doing:

"My first job was basically clerical, so academic training didn't apply at that level. I learned on the job, supported later by my ONC and IPM qualifications. I learned from other people"

(Employee Relations Officer, Vehicle manufacture);

"...I learned the job as I did it"

(Personnel Officer, Electronic consumer goods).

Possibly, the academic qualifications held by some of this group might have been classified as knowledge they brought to the job, but as the following extracts show, the interviewees discounted this:

"I had little practical knowledge. I had theory from my IPM studies, but my job bore no relation to the IPM description of the job..."

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"I brought nothing to it. Nothing in my IPM, or my degree, helped me..."

(Employee Relations Mgr., Metal manuf., 'initial chooser');

"...I gained a lot from the job itself. There was not a lot brought to it..."

(Personnel Officer, Electronics, 'initial chooser' with MSc in Industrial Psychology);

"Not much. A degree in Psychology. I've only recently seen the benefit of that. I learned the job as I went along..."

(Personnel Director, Public Sector Development);

"Specialist knowledge, nil. In terms of other knowledge, nothing"

(Personnel Officer, Petrochemicals, Honours degree Psychology).

4% (4) had no academic input, and felt that the main practical asset they brought to personnel was their commonsense approach.

3% (3) thought that the main contribution to their first personnel job was academic knowledge, although this was not enough for the full range of work required by their jobs:

"My college diploma was relevant to personnel management, and I was given training through the Industrial Training Board. Other than that, I was self-taught - and I was tutored by the then personnel manager"

(Personnel Officer, Carpet manufacture);

"I had courses in counselling and IR from my teaching experience...I learned other aspects of personnel management by finding out the relevant things myself"

(Personnel Manager, Retailing);

"I had a fair amount of theory about personnel management and IR, and the practical experience from two [degree-related work experience] placements - six months. That was it. It was theoretical knowledge mainly"

(Employee Resourcing Manager, Surgical supplies).

All of the interviewees who reported previous organization/other experience as the knowledge they brought to personnel work identified the aspect of that experience which was of most use in personnel. Variously, these were knowledge of: systems and procedures, the workforce, other managers, contacts, production techniques, operational problems, and trades union agreements. One personnel manager in vehicle manufacture however, felt that even though he had completed a 'comprehensive' general traineeship, he was "still pretty raw, even in organizational knowledge".

There was an emphasis on learning by doing in the two largest groups reported in Table 9.1. This involved looking, listening, and asking questions. None of the late entrants mentioned personnel-specific training in their former jobs. Only 17% (16) of the interviewees, mentioned receiving formal training at the start of their personnel careers. A recurrent theme from the others was entering personnel "at the sharp end", and being "thrown in at the deep end".

Some interviewees imparted a sense of their own horror at being "a total rookie" and/or being "expected to be effective from day one". One man observed, "I hadn't a clue what I was getting into". Another who had no knowledge whatever about personnel work was "told to set up a personnel department". A former sales manager was promoted to training manager, and had no knowledge of designing and presenting training courses. His first attempts at these were compiled from textbooks.

Indeed, a common feature of the 'learning on the job' accounts was the extent to which the interviewees had trained themselves. Almost always, these learning episodes were connected with specific problems which had arisen in the course of their work. We have some indication from these interview data of the unstructured developmental processes identified by Burgoyne (1983), and of the informal and accidental learning that can occur in personnel work (Mumford, 1987b).

Ad hoc learning experiences, however, were the main source of initial personnel-specific knowledge for all but 16 of our sample. We can see that the types of self-training in which they engaged have certain disadvantages. First, when faced with situations about which they knew very little, they had to identify their own knowledge deficiency. Next, they had to gather and process information from colleagues, other contacts, and textual sources and 'apply' it to the situation/problem in hand. In this, they had to take it on trust that the information they were processing would provide a valid solution,

and lead to a successful outcome. As they were working from a base of limited knowledge about a particular subject, their assessment of validity could not take place before the information was 'applied'.

An analysis of the outcome(s) would be their only check on the validity/utility of suggested solutions in these circumstances. A 'bad' outcome would obviously cause a re-assessment of what had been 'learned', and itself contribute to the learning process by confirming the type of action which did not achieve a satisfactory conclusion. A 'good' outcome, however, might reinforce in the mind of the learner the subjective judgement that 'this is the way to do it'. There is some danger in that assumption, as it does not recognise that the information processed by the learner may have been partial and/or out of date. Nor does it recognise the 'hit and miss' nature of the knowledge acquisition process outlined above. The learner 'hits' only on the information which is presented as relevant, but 'misses' on information which may be more relevant, but is not presented or not immediately available.

The time-pressures in situation-specific self-training may be important in limiting the learner's ability to explore a wide range of information. By their very nature, situation-specific learning experiences may be self-limiting. More importantly, they do not provide a training in or knowledge of other, wider, aspects of personnel work. While accidental processes of learning might be "real" and "direct", they were also "insufficient"

(Mumford, 1987b:32).

Some interviewees learned from their immediate superior and/or peers and/or subordinates, and we can identify that this form of learning may perpetuate a reliance on 'old' personnel theory/practice, especially if the mentors learned in a similar way. Shackleton and Taylor (1988) wrote that a major problem with 'on the job' training was that it did not provide new ideas, techniques, models or frameworks. Moreover, there may be a further risk in copying others, and borrowing their experience. Odiorne (1967) felt that borrowing would be valuable only "if you can learn all the details of that experience", otherwise the result might be imitating the wrong things, or copying "some irrelevancies rather than the fundamental germ of the idea".

While we might argue that formal knowledge of current theory/'best practice' gained from an IPM or other personnel-related course might forestall the possibility of obtaining incomplete/incorrect information, we should note that the few 'initial choosers' who entered personnel with an IPM qualification found themselves in the same situation as Whittaker (1989), who "had to learn rather quickly through experience". Their learning experiences 'on the job' appeared to be as self-selecting and situation-specific as those undertaken by the personnel entrants who had no theoretical background. The experiences of our sample in connection with initial training in their first personnel appointment mirror those of Mumford's (1987b) personnel directors, where "very few" received coaching, and

even then, it was 'accidental' whether they did so or not.

The matter of experiential learning will be discussed further in Chapter Ten, where we shall look at some ideas about the training of personnel specialists.

The extent to which personnel knowledge is organization/sector-specific

The interviewees were asked, "How far is the information and knowledge that you use in your work specific to your organization and/or the sector it is in? (compared with knowledge relevant to all personnel work in any organization)". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 9.2 .

Table 9.2

Perceptions of knowledge being industry/sector-specific

<u>Description of knowledge</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Generally applicable anywhere	44	46
Mixture of specific and general	31	32
Applicable own organization/sector only	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
Totals	<u>96</u>	<u>100</u>

46% (44) felt that their knowledge could be used in other personnel jobs:

"I don't think the organization matters. I have relevant all-round knowledge, applicable anywhere..."
(Personnel Manager, Legal firm);

"...I came from foods to heavy engineering, and found no difficulty in the change of environment"
(Personnel Manager, Heavy engineering);

"I'm not specialised to this industry. I guide managers into the right path, and I could do that anywhere..."
(Assistant Personnel Manager, Electrical contracting);

"In education and training, you can't really be insular. You have to be alert to what is happening around. I could use my knowledge in another organization, particularly if it was in engineering"
(Training Officer, Public Sector Energy);

"...the legislation is general to all organizations, and you can learn the procedures. What is different is the in-house politics in the different companies. A personnel manager will not be successful unless he is attuned to that aspect"
(Personnel and Admin. Manager, Oil drilling machinery).

32% (31) reported that their knowledge was both sector/
organization-specific and generally applicable:

"I have a specialist knowledge of the nature of the Service, but the basic skills are the same, and I could use them anywhere"

(Personnel Officer, HM Prisons);

"50% is relevant anywhere - legislation, recruitment, etcetera. The other half is industry agreements, and our political profile. We are a very political industry. Our problems make news..."

(Staff Manager, Coal);

"A lot of it is particular to this organization...Say, 50% is generally applicable - IR and recruitment"

(Personnel Manager, Textiles).

This group described organization/sector-specific knowledge as, variously; terms and conditions of employment, operating within union agreements, and their local policies/procedures and systems. General personnel knowledge was identified as legislation, recruitment and other personnel techniques, and interpersonal skills.

21% (22) thought that their knowledge would not find application outside of their organization or sector, and a variety of reasons for this were presented:

"I've only ever had two employers; the Army and the brewery. I've never had broader experience, so I don't know what other personnel managers do. My knowledge is restricted to what I have done. My personal activity is specialised to the brewing industry"

(Personnel Manager, Brewers);

"...that is a difficult question. I have a narrow role - graduate recruitment and top-stream management development. It's a specialist area, and a narrow view of the personnel spectrum"

(Assistant Staff Manager, Coal);

"The knowledge and information I use is very specific to the organization, because it is a Japanese company, with a Japanese boss...it changes your way of thinking..."

(Personnel Officer, Electronic consumer goods);

"...the clothing industry is very factory-floor related; 'up-front' management. We have a predominantly female labour force, and try to ensure a large welfare element..."

(Personnel Manager, Garment manufacture);

"The information I use is specific to retailing. It's totally different from personnel management in any other trade. I sit on Industrial Tribunals, and there is nothing in my work here that prepares me for the type of problems encountered by personnel people in different industries to this"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"It's specialist. The men are different - they're site workers with a casual-labour attitude; and they're in factories, where they are unionised. The site workers are not so unionised. The problems I have are not in any textbooks..."

(Personnel Officer, Construction);

"The chap who was here before me knew far more about personnel theory - but he didn't survive. That sums it up!"

(Personnel Manager, Newspaper publishing).

In Chapter Seven, the senior executive interviewees thought that knowledge about the organization/sector was of equal or more importance to any professional knowledge their personnel director/department might have. We shall return to knowledge which is organization/sector-specific later, in Chapter Ten.

How personnel specialists update their knowledge

The respondents were asked, "What methods do you use to keep abreast of developments in professional knowledge related to personnel work?". This question may be seen in Appendix 3, p13,

B31 . A pre-coded list of ten possible methods (including 'other') was provided, and the respondents were required to indicate their frequency of use of each method, by scoring a 5-point Likert scale. Their responses are shown below, in Table 9.3 .

Table 9.3
Methods of updating professional personnel knowledge

<u>Method</u>	<u>Always</u>		<u>Frequ-</u> <u>ently</u>		<u>Occas-</u> <u>ional</u>		<u>Sel-</u> <u>dom</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
Reading specialist publications	22	10	124	56	64	29	10	4	3	1	223
Contact personnel staff, in-house	7	3	84	39	62	29	29	13	34	16	216
Contact personnel staff, external	1	0	57	26	103	47	38	18	20	9	219
Textbooks	6	6	52	24	82	38	67	31	10	4	217
Employers' Assoc'n circulars	16	7	63	30	47	22	38	18	48	23	212
External training courses	1	0	12	6	129	59	64	29	12	6	218
IPM	8	4	52	25	66	32	40	19	42	20	208
Personal contact Employers' Assoc'n	2	1	42	20	52	25	56	27	57	27	209
In-house training courses	2	1	6	3	83	40	66	32	51	24	208
Other	3	23	4	31	6	46	0	0	0	0	13

Three respondents did not answer this question, and not all of the methods of updating knowledge were scored by all of the respondents. Our interest was the methods used by the entire sample (229), and therefore the mean scores were calculated (weighted Always = 5 to Never = 1) to produce the rank order

shown in Table 9.4 below.

Table 9.4
Rank order of mean scores - methods of updating
personnel knowledge

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Mean</u>
1	Reading specialist publications	3.585
2	Contact personnel staff, in-house	2.834
3	Contact personnel staff, external	2.786
4	Textbooks	2.742
5	Employers' association circulars	2.607
6	External training courses	2.533
7	IPM	2.480
8	Personal contact Employers' assoc'n	2.197
9	In-house training courses	2.035
10	Other	0.213

The most common method of updating professional knowledge was reading specialist publications, for example; about employment law, tribunal decisions, salary/benefits surveys, training, health and safety, and personnel management. This would appear to be a somewhat surer method of obtaining 'correct' information than the sources ranked second and third, contact with in-house and external personnel specialists.

We might possibly ask here, where the internal/external contacts obtained the information/knowledge which they passed on to others. The 'personnel contact' responses also raise the question of whether we are seeing a 'ripple-effect' form of information transfer, where one person receives training/information/knowledge, and then disseminates it to others. If this is indeed the case, the cost benefit to employers is immediately apparent: many can be 'updated' for the cost of training one; or better still, at no cost, if the information is gained from an external contact.

The disadvantages of this type of information dissemination however, are the same as we discussed earlier in connection with learning from others in 'on the job' training. The information transmitted may be partial and/or incorrect, and/or only partly understood by the donor. Moreover, the recipient may only partially understand the information received, and as a 'learner' is not initially in a position to know whether or not their new 'knowledge' is correct/complete.

While textbooks were the fourth most common method of updating professional knowledge, 34% (77) of the sample seldom or never read them. Only 25% (58) used them frequently/always, compared to 64% (146) who read specialist publications frequently/always. On average, 64% of all the literature read by the respondents was about personnel work generally, rather than about their employing industries/sectors.

Employers' associations' circulars and personal contact with Employers' associations ranked 5th and 8th respectively. The pre-coded question did not allow for descriptions of the types of information obtained from these. In the writer's experience, however, Employers' associations normally disseminate 'new' information about employment-related legislation, and industry/sector-specific national/local agreements about pay, terms and conditions of employment, and other negotiated matters. Their role is to provide advice/guidance about these, rather than about any wider issues of personnel theory and/or practice.

The IPM, which promotes both education and training in personnel

theory and practice, was used frequently/always by 26% (60) of the sample, and was ranked 7th as a method of updating knowledge. Although the question did not require the respondents to note the nature of their involvement, four wrote that they attended branch meetings/ IPM night-classes. From the 'external contacts' section of Chapter Six, we know that the IPM did not feature in the respondents' networks for information-gathering/exchange purposes. It seems reasonable to suppose then, that updating of knowledge through the IPM was achieved, variously, by attending branch meetings and/or qualification classes, reading IPM-sponsored literature, and attending seminars/workshops/conferences organized by the Institute. We shall look at the IPM's role in personnel training later, in Chapter Ten.

The first section of this chapter showed that formal training was not a common feature in our interviewees' first exposure to personnel work. In Table 9.3, formal training by way of external and in-house courses ranked 6th and 9th respectively. 33% (76) seldom or never attended external course, while only 6% (13) did so frequently/always. Occasional attendance at external courses was reported by 56% (129) of the respondents (229).

4% (8) used in-house courses frequently/always to update their personnel knowledge, while 51% (117) seldom/never did so. In-house training was an occasional event for 36% (83) of the sample. The reader is reminded however, of the data in Chapter

Four, where it was shown that 12% (27) of the respondents were the sole personnel specialists in their organizations, and 111 worked in organizations where there were between 2 and 20 specialists. The low scores for in-house training may therefore only reflect that the majority of respondents may not have had in-house specialist training staff and/or facilities available to them.

'Other' responses ranked 10th, and these concerned obtaining information from, variously; newspapers, television, health and safety bodies, the Department of Employment, Chambers of Commerce and MBA study.

Several points arise from Table 9.3, none of which reflect particularly well on employers. First, while the updating methods ranked 1 to 5 may possibly be efficient, in that they afford relatively easy access to information, they may not, as discussed earlier, be effective. They do however, seem to be cost-effective from an employer's point of view, as methods which involve relatively little cash outlay. Additionally, while theory may be provided from literature, practitioners may have to evolve the related practice themselves. While elements of practice may be present in the information transmitted by other practitioners, we must ask how much validated theory is given as well, and whether the donor has interpreted the theory correctly. While the informational processes involved in ranks 1 to 5 may be inexpensive, they also seem haphazard.

Second, the methods under discussion are cost-effective to the

employer in terms of time, as they do not involve absence from the work-place. Moreover, if we refer to the data presented in Chapter Six about personnel specialists' overtime working, we would not expect that reading would normally take place within working hours. Indeed, many of our interviewees told us that they 'caught up' with reading in their own time.

Third, and following from this last point, we can see that the updating methods ranked 1 to 4 inevitably involve employee, rather than employer, motivation. The impression that these processes are haphazard is reinforced when we consider that the practitioners must know where to look and/or who to ask for information, and be sufficiently motivated to initiate contact with the information source. The 'other' responses are of relevance here. Some practitioners became aware of new developments in personnel through newspaper/other media reports, and thereafter obtained more information themselves.

Fourth, we must ask if it is coincidence that the potentially more costly updating methods of external and in-house training courses achieved much lower mean scores than those which were inexpensive. During the interviews, it became clear that the cost of training was an issue. Some interviewees had to "chase" management for training. Such pressure was sometimes effective, and sometimes not:

"...[my last course] was self-motivated. I had heard it was the best, and I made sure I was sent on it - persistently, as it was of one week's duration, and therefore expensive"
(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"My last course was years ago. I can't remember when. I've tried to attend courses since, but the company doesn't want to spend money..." (Personnel Mgr., Multiple retailing).

Interviewees' perceptions of their training

Before we look at the training our personnel specialists received to achieve their career objectives, we shall first consider what those objectives were. The interviewees were asked, "Where do you see yourself in five years' time?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5

Interviewees' career objectives in five years' time

<u>Perception of future job</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Promoted in personnel, same employer	31	29
In the same job	30	28
Retired/near retirement	13	12
Non-personnel job, same employer	8	7
Higher personnel job, other employer	7	7
Personnel, same level, other employer	6	5
Self-employed	6	5
Non-personnel job, other employer	4	4
Other personnel job, same level & employer	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

71% (77) felt that they would still be in personnel work in five years' time, while 11% (12) thought that they would have jobs other than personnel ones. 12% (13) would be retired, or near retirement age, and 6% (5) wanted to be self-employed, one as a personnel consultant, and the others full-time in businesses they already owned/part-owned.

While 31% (29) felt that they would be promoted in the personnel functions of their own organizations, 28% (30) thought that they would still be in the same jobs. All but one of this last group mentioned age and/or lack of promotion opportunities as a factor

in this:

"...there are few avenues for promotion, with the organization contracting. At my age, burning ambition is not part of my makeup any longer..." (Personnel Manager, Textiles);

"...I'm realistic about my own attainments. There's a lack of formal training. I just have experience in my own field"

(Personnel Manager, Garment manufacture).

One interviewee felt that he did not wish to move within five years:

"...I'm not career ambitious. So many people over-promote themselves until they are unhappy, and can't cope. It's daft to leave a job because you feel you can do it. You should try and do your own job better"

(Assistant Staff Manager, Multiple retailing).

The seven interviewees who were going to non-personnel jobs with their current employers were all bound for general management positions, and two of these did not wish to leave personnel:

"...I didn't realise how much I would enjoy personnel...I find I don't want to get out of it. In five years, I'll probably be in another department, as we have a 'Civil Service' career path. Everyone gets a chance to see most parts of the service. The background you get before coming into personnel is invaluable - and then personnel widens that view to a greater extent"

(Personnel Officer, Public Sector, Lighthouses);

"...in a branch, as a manager - reluctantly....In order to be an efficient Staff Manager in a bank, you have to have direct experience in all aspects, to identify and relate to the problems of branch management. That is important. I am aware that my time here is limited, but I want to structure my career to come back into personnel at a higher level later"

(Assistant Staff Manager, Banking).

7% (7) thought that they would be in higher personnel jobs in other organizations. All of these interviewees felt that they would have to leave their present employer to get promotion, as

their only chance of this would be if their immediate superiors left. The 6% (6) who felt that they might be in other organizations, but at the same level of post, gave similar reasons for changing employers, but were willing to transfer at the same level to obtain promotion opportunities in the future.

4% (4) wished to leave personnel, and either return to their former occupations, or take up something new. Three further interviewees felt that their futures lay in personnel work, and that they would probably be 'developed' across a range of personnel skills, and that in five years there was a possibility of still being at the same level of post, but in a different specialism.

Training for career objectives

The interviewees were asked, "Are you receiving any training to achieve your career objectives?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 9.6.

Table 9.6

Training for career objectives

<u>Receiving training for objectives?</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
No	46	43
Receive training for current job only	46	43
Yes, for career objectives	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

43% (46) said that they were not receiving training for their career objectives. 15 of these had not been on a course for two years or more. 15 had attended a course within the last year, but saw these as 'updating', or augmenting knowledge/skills they already had, rather than broadening their personnel-

specific skills/knowledge. A further 16 mentioned their aspirations about promotion, and felt that any training they had received did not 'develop' them towards posts with greater responsibility. Four personnel officers in one company complained about their company's attitude towards the training of personnel staff. Although all four had been on personnel-specific courses occasionally, these interviewees felt that they had not been adequately trained:

"...Personnel here doesn't have a structured approach to training. We are involved in career-developing everybody else, but we don't appear to be terribly good to ourselves. I was put into interviewing before I was ever put on a course...";

"No. The one criticism I have is the lack of training...";

"No. It's an area of dispute...";

"No...there are courses, but we don't seem to be into them in a big way...".

One personnel manager in the sales division of a brewing company made the point that management training stopped at sales manager level in his organization:

"...Once you know how to manage, it's just a matter of scale after that".

43% (46) received training which related to their current jobs. This was predominantly the updating/augmentation of existing knowledge. For this group, 'new' knowledge tended to be about computers and/or administrative systems which were being introduced by their employers.

14% (16) felt that they were being trained for their career objectives. Eleven of this group thought that their employers

were developing them for a future in general management. The remainder of this group was made up of three MBA students, one doing the IPM, and one DMS student. These interviewees had their fees paid by their organizations, although the initiative to study had been their own. Two of the MBA students were studying in their own time, while the other three students received time off work.

The interviewees were asked, "When was the last training course you attended?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 9.7.

Table 9.7

Interviewees' last course attended

<u>Time prior to interview date</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Within 3 months	32	30
4 - 12 months	50	46
13 - 23 months	8	7
2 - 4 years	11	10
5 - 9 years	2	2
10 years and over	4	4
Have never attended a course	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

76% (82) had received formal training in the year prior to the interview, and only one person had never attended a course.

23% (25) said that their last training experience had been more than one year previously, and of these, one could not remember when that had been. These results will be discussed further shortly, in connection with the subjects of the courses attended, which are shown below in Table 9.8.

Table 9.8

Subject of last course interviewees attended

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Recruitment/selection methods/skills	18	17
Computer-related	14	13
Industrial relations/negotiating skills	12	11
Legislation	12	11
Communication skills	12	11
Training methods/management development	10	9
General management skills	9	8
Salary administration	5	5
Personnel management	4	4
Miscellaneous	11	10
Have not attended a course	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

The Miscellaneous category included single reports of absenteeism, administrative procedures, appraisal, expenses processing, industrial tribunal case preparation, manpower planning, material requirements planning, methods study, pensions, and two reports of rapid reading.

As so many of our interviewees wished to stay in personnel work, and as the training experiences listed above are predominantly personnel-specific, it might appear that most of our sample had access to relevant, and as we saw in Table 9.7 fairly recent training. The interview scripts however, reveal that much of the training was ad hoc, and reactive, rather than part of any scheduled programme. What is more, 'courses' were generally of the one-day seminar/workshop type, presenting material which was largely of an 'updating' nature.

We have already seen that 31 of the interviewees who said 'No' in Table 9.6 did not feel that this type of training developed them. It merely reinforced knowledge they already had. Only

two interviewees were part of a structured development programme for their futures in personnel. One attended an 'executive development' formal training programme of two months' duration, followed by a two-month placement in a personnel post in a different division/location to his normal job. The other had attended three courses in seven months, in recruitment, counselling, and management development.

Moreover, 44% (47) had initiated their own participation in a course/seminar/workshop. The training they secured dealt with four main areas: the practical action required following new legislation; interpersonal skills; new training/management development techniques; and learning about computer applications in personnel work in connection with the feasibility of these for their own departments.

Training was generated by the immediate superiors of 34% (37) of the interviewees, and 8 of these training opportunities arose in connection with decisions which had been made by senior management to implement new systems/techniques in which the interviewees would be involved. All of the training however, in what were described as 'general management skills' in Table 9.8 had been suggested by the interviewees' immediate superiors.

14% (15) of the recommendations for training came from training departments, while 2% (2) arose from suggestions by management consultants. 6% (6) of the interviewees had their training generated by 'other' sources: five of these were annual conferences which practitioners were required to attend, and one

was the result of a training recommendation made by the Office of Industrial Tribunals in respect of a tribunal member.

Only 9% (10) of the sample thought that formal training was an ongoing feature of their work, although two of these had not been on a course for two years, because they found difficulty in finding the time to attend one. One personnel officer, however, said:

"...Talking of the concept of training - it is possible to look at it through the wrong end of the telescope. It is not only being on a course. My whole time here has been training"

(Personnel Officer, Oil).

Although there was an emphasis on 'learning on the job' in the first section of this chapter, only two other interviewees mentioned this in their replies to the question about training. The relative absence of references to experiential learning suggests that, in the perceptions of the interviewees who were not, as they saw it, being trained for the future, training was something apart from learning in the course of their jobs, and as we have already seen, they regarded development as something apart from the situation-specific training they received. These concepts appeared clearly differentiated, and this finding is similar to one reported by Davies and Easterby-Smith (1984), who were "struck by the clarity of the distinction" between 'learning' and 'development' made by the managers they interviewed:

"For them, 'learning' referred to the products of training and to the knowledge and tricks of the trade that a manager can pick up over the years; whereas 'development' referred to the manager acquiring greater general competence or capacity, and was normally linked in managers' minds to promotion. The former tended to be viewed within a relatively short time perspective, and the latter within a much longer perspective"

(Davies and Easterby-Smith, 1984: 170).

A common feature of the training received by 86% (92) of the sample was its ad hoc and task-specific nature. This bears some resemblance to the unstructured learning processes reported earlier, where learning episodes occurred in response to situation-specific stimuli. Moreover, there was no evidence, outside of the group who felt they were being 'developed', of what might be called 'cross-fertilisation' training. The specialist trainers went to courses about training, and recruitment officers attended recruitment/selection-specific ones. It is worth mentioning here that the four personnel officers who earlier complained about the lack of personnel-specific training in their company, feared that once they were 'channelled' into specialist functions in a large personnel department, they would have great difficulty in moving into other types of personnel work, because they had neither the training or experience to do so.

Conclusions

In Chapter Nine, we have looked at matters of theory and practice in our consideration of the types of knowledge our interviewees brought to their first personnel post, whether their current knowledge is generally applicable or industry/

sector specific, how they update their professional knowledge, and the place that formal training has in that process. All of these areas of enquiry are of relevance to Chapter Ten, which is about reconciling theory and practice in training for the personnel occupation.

It has been clear from Chapter Nine that the process of learning about personnel work was unstructured and haphazard for the majority of our sample. Thrown in at the deep end and "expected to get on with it" without any formal personnel-specific training at the outset, all but 16 of them initially learned about the work by doing it. In this, the sample were largely self-taught, although some obtained assistance from superiors, peers and subordinates. The few 'initial choosers' who had an IPM qualification prior to entry seemed to be no better placed than the 'unqualified' late entrants when it came to the practical aspects of the work. Indeed, some IPM graduates had difficulty in relating the theory they had learned to the work they were expected to do.

Obviously, our study obtained data from the survivors of what seemed for many to be a traumatic introduction to the personnel occupation. We have no way of knowing how many other personnel entrants had similar experiences and did not succeed in the occupation.

For our late entrants, organizational/other knowledge they had gained from previous jobs was useful, but it was not sufficient to enable them to do specialist personnel work. It is possible

that non-specialist others' perceptions of personnel and what it involves, may in part be responsible for the idea that anyone can do personnel work without specialist training:

"In this building, everyone looks at Personnel and says, "I can do that". We would never dream of telling a drilling engineer how he is going to drill a hole in the ground, yet everyone tells you what grade he should be on, and how much he should be paid..."
(Personnel Officer, Oil Exploration);

"...I couldn't go in and do an engineer's job - but he can come in and do mine. Anyone is qualified to do personnel work - or so they think..."
(Training Officer, Public Sector, Energy).

Of course, our sample have shown, from their diverse occupational backgrounds, that almost anyone can come in and do personnel work - but only if they are prepared to learn how to do it.

In this chapter, we have seen that the initiative to learn was very much the interviewees' and respondents' own, rather than something prompted by their employers in the form of structured learning and/or development experiences. In the updating of knowledge for example, the respondents favoured methods which relied on their own initiative and involvement.

It is a matter of conjecture whether the most popular methods of updating, which were reading specialist publications, contact with in-house/external personnel staff, textbooks and employers' associations' circulars, were used because they involved minimal cost to employers, in comparison with formal training programmes. Yet, if we remember from Chapter Seven the financial controls which are imposed on personnel in the form of

adherence to budgets, together with the chilling observation of one managing director that if his personnel department was not effective, "they'd not be here", we can identify two points which may be 'prompts' to personnel specialists to educate themselves quickly, at minimal cost to their employers.

We have seen in Chapter Nine that learning by experience and/or formal training has been, for our interviewees at least, tended to be situation- and job-specific. While there are certain merits in this, in connection with the contingency factors in personnel work discussed by Legge (1978), Cherns (1979), Tyson (1985) and Tyson and Fell (1986) among others, we can see that these stimuli for learning do not appear to contribute much towards professionalism (narrowly defined) as the 'application' of a defined range or 'body' of occupational knowledge.

This study did not set out to ascertain exactly how much theoretical knowledge, or which skills, each member of its sample possessed. Yet, in the course of the study it was clear that the interviewees/respondents pursued the knowledge/skills which they (or their employers) thought they needed to have to perform their jobs. For as long as personnel specialists and their employers feel that they can pick and choose knowledge/skills/techniques to suit situational contingencies alone, we cannot reasonably endorse the view that the label 'professional' (narrowly defined) is an appropriate one for personnel work in practice. Indeed, as we have already seen from Chapters Seven and Eight, our sample's 'professionalism' was couched only

in lay terms of being seen to do their jobs well, in relation to what was expected of them by other management, and their employers.

The implications of the findings in Chapter Nine will be pursued further in Chapter Ten.

CHAPTER TEN: RECONCILING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Introduction

In Chapter Nine, it was suggested that two problems existed which related to theory and practice in personnel work. First, with 'on the job' learning, doubts were voiced about the ability of this type of process to provide adequate/correct/ up to date theory as well as practical skills. Second, where 'initial chooser' practitioners had theoretical knowledge from a personnel-specific qualification, the theory they had did not help them to perform their first personnel jobs. There was therefore, a 'gap' apparent between theory and practice.

This chapter will first examine data about the relevance of the social or behavioural sciences to personnel work, and in doing so will focus on the idea of 'applying' these sciences. Second, it will review the information our sample provided about the types of knowledge/skills they use in their jobs, and present a model of knowledge use in the personnel occupation. Third, it will look at our sample's perceptions about studying for an IPM qualification. Finally, it will discuss some ideas about personnel-specific training for personnel specialists and other managers.

The relevance of the social/behavioural sciences to personnel work

In Chapter Three, the literature review discussed the social/ behavioural sciences as providers of knowledge relevant to personnel work. According to Cotgrove and Box (1970:15), the

goal of science was public knowledge, and one of its most distinctive features was "the imperative to publish, to share findings". In the social/behavioural sciences, there was a tendency to present material in a jargon-bound way, which was not easily understood by managers (Gill, 1982). Tyson and Fell (1986) pointed to the difficulty which arose because "the study of sociology and psychology [had] not typically been for managerial purposes".

Baritz (1960: 191-2) argued that American managements' use of the social sciences had constrained the further development of social science knowledge, as social scientists' investigative 'scientific' role was abrogated for a consultancy/technician one, in which social scientists inevitably "backed away from the political and ethical considerations of their work". Managers, however, also backed away from those aspects of social-scientific findings, because they were "potentially very threatening to the core issues of managerial ideologies and values" (Gill, 1982).

Morgan (1990) felt that a sociological approach was essential for a full understanding of organizational life. Yet managers, including personnel specialists, had tended to favour ideas which were derived from psychology (cf. Tyson, 1986; Watson, 1977). Watson attributed this in part to a lack of social-scientific education and training. We can recognise also that Gill's (1982) argument about the threatening nature of social-scientific findings may be of relevance here. Personnel

managers in particular, were anxious to secure short-term practical solutions (Watson, 1980). This might explain their hesitancy to take on board any ideas from social-scientific findings which might involve social change, a much longer-term and more uncertain prospect. This last argument however, assumes that personnel and possibly other managers have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the social sciences to inform conscious decisions to reject social-scientific findings on ideological/other grounds.

We may possibly come nearer to identifying a practical impediment to social science utilisation if we approach the matter with a different hypothesis. This is that managers may not have an adequate knowledge/understanding of the social sciences, but nevertheless hold opinions about those which are used to justify their resistance to social science-based ideas.

In our study's senior executive and personnel specialist interviews, for example, there was some evidence that the social sciences were equated variously with social/welfare work, left-wing politics, and impractical "airy-fairy" ideas based on "mumbo-jumbo":

"...academics are airy-fairy, and haven't got a clue - they've no sense..."

(Managing Director, Public Sector Ports);

"...[our personnel department] is down to earth. They don't go overboard on social science-based schemes..."

(Area Manager, Public Sector Transport);

"...as personnel, we're expected to believe in the mumbo-jumbo..."

(Personnel Manager, Engineering);

"...actually, my view of social workers is not very flattering. It attracts people who themselves are not especially adequate, and they get a kick out of helping the really inadequate"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"...I don't know a lot about it, so I can't express anything; but I feel there's a fair amount of nonsense talked about it"

(Personnel Officer, Education);

"...a lot of personnel specialists are drips and drop-outs - the soft-option people - the social scientists with a 'do-good' mentality. You get that syndrome if you're not careful - Guardian-reading youth, out to put industry to rights by employee welfare"

(Managing Director, Road Haulage/storage).

Moreover, the ensuing interview data will show that social science findings are perceived by some personnel practitioners as a "hotch-potch" of impractical jargon- and theory-bound "claptrap" and "eyewash".

The interviewees were asked, "What do you feel about the relevance of social or behavioural science to personnel management?". The frequency table of responses is shown below in Table 10.1 .

Table 10.1

Relevance of social/behavioural sciences to personnel work

<u>Perceptions of relevance</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Very relevant	25	23
Relevant as background	23	21
Relevant in some areas only	21	19
Don't know much about it	15	14
Would only use if practical/appropriate	10	9
Would only use if common-sense	5	5
Little or no relevance	3	3
Other	6	6
Totals	<u>108</u>	<u>100</u>

23% (25) felt that social or behavioural science was very relevant to personnel management. There was an emphasis in

these accounts on the behavioural sciences, and some interviewees expressed doubts about the practicality of theories:

"It is central to legitimate personnel activity. Personnel can be there as the administrative role, and survive - but you need behavioural science to do personnel management well"
(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"It's very relevant...behavioural science assists us to explain to management the reasons for certain employee behaviour. It gives management something to lean on - assists them to do their jobs better"
(Personnel Manager, Engineering);

"It is very relevant, but difficult to use. I have not found many instances of social or behavioural theories being particularly useful. My own background in psychology has made me very sceptical...I am more careful than someone who has not got my educational background...and more critical"
(Personnel Director, Public Sector Development);

"The social sciences are absolutely relevant, but must be kept in their place. I see the social sciences as a tool. If it can be used, I use it. If it's not practicable or appropriate, I don't"
(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"They must be very relevant. The problem is recognising the theory, when the practice is all around you..."
(Personnel Manager, Food distribution).

21% (23) thought that a background awareness of the social/behavioural sciences was useful, but there were reservations:

"It's a nice thing for background - not in practical terms. It is there, I suppose..."
(Personnel Officer, Telecommunications);

"It perhaps opens your eyes, if one were to interpret it sensibly. I studied sociology and psychology for the IPM ...if you took it all on board and tried to put it into any organization, you'd get laughed out of bounds"
(Assistant Staff Manager, Multiple retailing);

"You've got to be careful in this area. It benefits you to have an awareness, but as sciences they are inexact - and you should beware of becoming trendy..."
(Personnel Manager, Heavy Engineering);

"It's useful background to be aware of. I think that social and behavioural sciences are a hotch-potch. They're not directly applicable..."

(Personnel Manager, Engineering);

"...if you don't go overboard, it's fine. When I studied it, it was heavy - eyewash - but in practice, it's there daily..."

(Personnel Manager, Electrical components);

"...it's becoming more evident that it's important. I see, daily, problems of drugs, alcoholism, and marriage breakups. Literature wouldn't really help in my work. I don't believe in books. It's experience that counts"

(Assistant Personnel Manager, Electrical contracting);

"The personnel manager needs to be aware of all the theories; for example, motivation. But how far they can be applied depends on how healthy the company is, and how able it is to spend time and resources on that kind of luxury"

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"Everyone who becomes a personnel manager should have studied some of the social sciences. I'm not saying it will make him a better personnel manager, but at least it will make him aware, and remove the mystique of the social sciences for him"

(Recruitment & Training Mgr., Television broadcasting).

19% (21) felt that the social or behavioural sciences could be relevant in some areas of personnel work. These accounts mentioned, variously; selection tests, attitude surveys, interviewing skills, and providing a general understanding of people and their problems:

"...theory and background have a place in broadening your knowledge of how people think and act..."

(Training Manager, Road Haulage);

"I recently studied it on the IPM. It was very theoretical, and it was difficult to relate theory to practice. Interviewing is the clearest link..."

(Senior Personnel Officer, Public Sector Development);

"...we get professional help with attitude surveys. The theory of groups is very important, especially in an IR situation"

(Personnel Manager, Metal manufacture).

14% (15) did not know much about the social and/or behavioural sciences:

"Not having gone into it in any depth, my gut feeling is that it is like the people I meet at seminars - they're so busy with all the rigmarole that they can't see the wood for the trees. I haven't studied it enough to say I'd not touch it with a barge-pole"

(Personnel Officer, Construction);

"I haven't a clue. I don't really know what it is"

(Personnel Officer, Telecommunications);

"I cannot comment on that. I have never even thought about it"

(Training Manager, Metal manufacture);

"...I sometimes regret I haven't got a greater knowledge in it"

(Personnel Officer, Finance).

9% (10) thought that they would use social and/or behavioural science theories if they worked in practice, and if they were appropriate for the situation:

"...there's a line you work on - if it seems to be good practice, you use it"

(Personnel Manager, Mechanical engineering).

6% (6) gave 'other' responses, which tended to be equivocal, and erred on the side of not knowing much about social or behavioural science:

"I haven't given much thought to it. It must be important in counselling. I took psychology in my IPM, so I suppose I must use it on a day-to-day basis - or do I?..."

(Personnel Manager, Consumer/Building products);

"How do you mean? [interviewer's explanation] - Oh! [pause] I wouldn't knock it. My personal viewpoint is that I don't put much weight on it. That is not to say that many people perhaps would"

(Personnel Manager, Hotels/leisure);

"I'm tempted to say it's a gimmick. I'm ignorant on the question. I haven't gone into it in depth. Without studying it, I wouldn't like to condemn it out of hand"

(Personnel Officer, Multi-product manufacture).

5% (5) felt that commonsense should be the factor by which social or behavioural science should be judged:

"...a lot of it is about commonsense. If it is commonsense, I use it...it's not entirely non-relevant - but I've got by so far!"

(Industrial Relations Officer, Oil).

3% (3) felt that the social or behavioural sciences were of little or no relevance to personnel work:

"...I hate it. All the theories are thrown at you. They don't fit our employees. People are so individual. It's a waste of time. Putting theory into practice is not practicable" (Personnel Officer, Wire goods, IPM student);

"...how much is applicable is questionable. Academic institutions should concentrate more on the practical aspects of personnel management than on the hypothetical theorist viewpoint. You cannot pick up a book, and assess or take in the necessary skills to practice personnel..."

(Personnel Officer, Oil).

Possibly, we might expect that the interviewees who had some exposure to the social and/or behavioural sciences in an IPM/other course might be more receptive to the idea that these sciences are relevant to personnel work. This expectation was not however, borne out:

"...I have reservations. I did sociology as part of the IPM syllabus. You can take it too far...one skill of a good personnel manager is to recognise a natural end to events. You don't get that from theory..."

(Personnel & Admin. Mgr., Oil drilling machinery);

"...How easy is it to decide what is knowledge from a formal base, and what you know from your own experience will work? I think it is useful background. Practical experience outweighs it"

(Personnel Officer, Electronics);

"...I did psychology and sociology for Part I of the IPM. I didn't sit the exams. I found that my practical experience conflicted so much with what I was expected to learn, that I gave it up. There were so many elements in it that were disputable. It's hard to obliterate everything you know, and absorb something you don't agree with"

(Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing);

"It can be useful background information, but it doesn't mean a tremendous amount...I wouldn't say it was necessary to become a personnel officer, by any means"

(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"...my degree heightens my awareness of human behaviour and other people's perceptions. It has limited application to personnel work in a formal sense. The problem with personnel people is that they try to apply behavioural science theories to the industrial world, rather than take a commonsense approach"

(Personnel Officer, Petrochemicals);

"It must be relevant, because it's included in courses. I can't for the life of me see immediately where - but it must be relevant somewhere. Maybe we use it subconsciously"

(Personnel Officer, Oil);

"As someone with an IPM qualification, I suppose I must subscribe to it..."

(Personnel Officer, Telecommunications).

Once all of the interview tapes had been transcribed, it was apparent that many of the interviewees had used the word "it" to answer a question about "social or behavioural science". This use of a singular pronoun to describe two identifiably different approaches may mean that, in the perceptions of 44% (47) of our interviewees, social science and behavioural science are one and the same thing. This group did not go on to describe 'it' in terms of one other science as 37 other interviewees did. For 17 of those, 'it' was behavioural science, while three mentioned social science, 12 talked of psychology, and five spoke of psychology and sociology.

Watson (1977) asked his interviewees the same question about the relevance of social or behavioural science to personnel management, and 88% (88) "said they felt the social/behavioural sciences to be relevant". In our study, 87% (84) felt this, although their approval was often qualified, as we saw earlier. 8% (8) of Watson's sample rejected any relevance, while 3% (3) in our study said that there was little/no relevance. It was interesting that one reason given for rejection in Watson's study was that the social/behavioural sciences were commonsense. In our study, commonsense was the yardstick by which 5% (5) judged relevance.

One third of Watson's 100 interviewees laid a "strong emphasis" on "psychological content". 42% (45) of our sample talked of, variously; how people tick, knowing how to communicate for best effect, treating people as they wanted to be treated, knowing how people think and act, understanding what goes on with people, influencing behaviour, psychometric tests, motivation, and structuring people to self-development in a positive atmosphere. In this, the interviewees showed the same tendency as Watson's sample to express "some folk-concept of psychology", rather than any wider understanding of psychology as an academic discipline:

"...most personnel managers are rule of thumb psychologists.."
(Personnel Manager, Carpet manufacture);

"I certainly think behavioural science is very important.
You really must understand how human beings tick..."
(Personnel Officer, Tourism).

Throughout the interviews, it was apparent that there was a

problem about 'applying' theories which were not practical/
practicable:

"...a lot of it is commonsense and experience. A lot of it is claptrap. Some is relevant. The IPM articles are not practicable - we can't all be Volvos"
(Personnel Manager, Garment manufacture);

"...It depends on the size of the company, whether you'd use the techniques. I wouldn't explore that kind of area in a company of this size..."
(Personnel Manager, Retailing);

"...we are involved in many studies. Some of the work is too academic, and you have to be careful with the conclusions. Academics are not practical..."
(Staff Manager, Coal).

42% (45) thought that psychological/behavioural insights were beneficial in their work, and was knowledge which could be used. It is worth noting here however, that the attraction of these was that they were perceived to enhance personnel and sometimes other managers' job performance:

"...the way people react is important to me in IR"
(Personnel Officer, Multi-product manufacture);

"...if we can communicate with the staff, and persuade them using the sciences, then we do it"
(Factory Personnel Manager, Pharmaceuticals);

"...the psychology of the approach is very important. You have to have communication. That's the root of the whole thing. If you are seen as a manipulator of people, you won't be successful..."
(Assistant Staff Manager, Banking);

"...it helps the understanding of why people do what they do - from a management point of view"
(Assistant Area Personnel Officer, NHS);

"...it is important that managers are aware how to get the best out of their staff"
(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications).

Although 87% (84) of our sample thought that the social/

behavioural sciences were relevant to personnel work, it would appear that social and/or behavioural scientists have little to feel complacent about in this result. The interview data in this section have presented a fairly gloomy picture of the difficulties experienced by practitioners in reconciling theory with practice, and it was disconcerting that some of the strongest criticisms in this connection came from interviewees who were recent graduates/students of the 'new' 1980s IPM syllabus, which was intended to be more practical than the one it replaced.

Further, while behavioural scientists may possibly like to think that their work might be 'applied' for the improvement of employer-employee relationships, it was clear that some of our interviewees were interested in psychology/behavioural science only as a tool to augment their own interpersonal skills, and to enhance their performance in their interactions with other managers. Motivation theory, which could be useful in, inter alia , understanding the needs of the workforce and directing their work efforts towards the achievement of organizational objectives, was viewed by some interviewees as a manipulative device to obtain similar outcomes in their relationships with other managers. It would seem therefore, that specific aspects of behavioural science are used in the narrow context of augmenting practitioners' abilities in the interpersonal aspects of managerial work, and thus ultimately for the more effective achievement of political purposes.

A model of knowledge used in the personnel occupation

This section will consolidate what we have learned about our sample's work, and how they do it, into a model of knowledge use, which will also take into account a number of observations from the literature about personnel-related knowledge. In doing this, it is not our intention to depict the resultant model as a 'body' of knowledge in the personnel occupation. Rather, we shall be looking at types of knowledge which can, but may not necessarily, be used in personnel work. This is of course, a different concept entirely from the one involved when thinking about a 'body' of knowledge, as it recognises the heterogeneity of personnel management in practice.

Part of the literature review in Chapter Three discussed the suggestions which Guest and Kenny (1983: 4-14) made about "certain kinds of background knowledge and information" which personnel managers "must possess" in order to diagnose problems and take effective action. In reviewing Guest and Kenny's 'requirements for practice', the writer noted that their infrastructure of knowledge/information appeared to bear some resemblance to a 'knowledge bank', in which the constituent parts, knowledge of the law and of procedures and so on, represented 'accounts' which practitioners could operate like bank accounts, making deposits/withdrawals of knowledge/skills when appropriate.

This concept may be a useful one for furthering our understanding of knowledge acquisition and use in personnel work. Its

usefulness derives from the idea that the knowledge each practitioner uses is in part unique. It thus accommodates the knowledge/skills which are gained from experience, which is something that, logically, the concept of a 'body' of knowledge cannot do. Further, it seems sensible to explore a model of knowledge use which relates to the processes of knowledge accumulation which were described for us by our sample, in Chapter Nine. Moreover, if we concentrate on what happens at the level of the individual practitioner, we may be able to make some progress towards an understanding of why a 'body' of knowledge about the personnel occupation is not readily identifiable (cf. Watson, 1977).

The concept of a 'knowledge bank' then, is one which relates to the knowledge/skills used by individuals in the performance of their jobs. At the time of entry to personnel, each practitioner has a set of 'accounts' already in operation; the pre-entry knowledge/skills which have accumulated in the course of his/her life. As we saw in Chapter Nine, some types of pre-entry knowledge, for example, about the employer's business/working practices/procedures and so on, were seen by their 'account holders' to be relevant to/of benefit in personnel work. When faced with work which was outside of their previous experience, however, new 'accounts' were opened, and knowledge/skills were deposited. Once opened, further knowledge and/or skills could in theory be made to all of the 'accounts' in the 'bank', in the form of updating and/or new learning. In practice, however, the 'accounts' with the most transactions of

this nature tended to be about knowledge which was used most often.

When knowledge was used, a 'withdrawal' was made from the 'account'. As Levitt (1989) so cleverly pointed out however, knowledge does not diminish because it is used. Indeed, if the use of knowledge leads to an experience by which the perceptions of the user about a subject are permanently changed in the ways described by Kolb and Fry (1975), Westerlund and Sjostrand (1979), and Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983), revised/new knowledge will be re-deposited in the original 'account', and possibly in other related ones as well.

Boyatzis (1982) described specialised knowledge as "a usable body of facts and concepts", and he recognised that managers may acquire knowledge which is of "perceived relevance" to their work, but which may not be of practical use to them. We have seen instances of knowledge 'accounts' lying fallow in some of the interview data reported in Chapter Nine, and in the social/behavioural sciences section of this one; some members of our sample said that while they had learned theory which was of perceived relevance to personnel work, they could not use it, because it was impracticable or otherwise inappropriate for 'application' in their own organizations.

The foregoing discussion about the 'knowledge bank' has provided a brief theoretical framework for use in our consideration of the model of knowledge use which follows. The model delineates an infrastructure of knowledge/skills which can, but may not

necessarily, be used in personnel work in practice.

There are two parts to the model; 'Macro' and 'Local', thus:

<u>MACRO</u>	<u>LOCAL</u>
National	Organizational
Sector/industry	Geographical locale
Personnel theory/best practice	Personal
Social	

The component parts of the model are outlined below, and will be discussed shortly. Asterisks mark those types of knowledge which were mentioned by Guest and Kenny (1983).

MACRO KNOWLEDGEDescription of knowledgeIncludes knowledge about:National

Legislation *

Requirements of Government
Departments

Trades unions' strategies

Economic policy *

Sector/industry

Employment practices

Payment/benefit systems

Terms and conditions of
employment

Trades unions' strategies

Personnel theory/skills
'best practice' *

Appraisal

Employee/industrial relations

Employment practices

Health, safety and welfare

Recruitment and selection

Rewards/benefits

Social/behavioural sciences *

Training/development

SocialCurrent social issues: e.g.,
policy indicators for; age dis-
crimination, AIDS, alcoholism,
childcare/creche facilities,
demographic change, drug abuse,
ethnic monitoring, language
skills for the single European
business market, smoking at
work, violence in the
work-place.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGEDescription of knowledgeIncludes knowledge about:Organizational

Formal structure *

Corporate business strategy

Internal economic climate *

Financial/other control systems

Product/service produced *

Technology/methods involved in
producing product/service *

In-house policies/procedures *

Labour force *

In-house trades unions'
strategiesInformal structure/ in-house
politics *Power/influence of personnel v.
others *'Culture', behavioural norms,
management styles

Role expected of personnel *

Choices available *

Geographical locale

External labour markets *

Traditions/norms of local
workforce *Employment practices of local
employersPersonalSkills: diagnostic *
statistical *
interpersonal *
political *

Identity

* see Guest and Kenny (1983: 4-14).

Chapter Three contains a detailed analysis of Guest and Kenny's arguments about each of the subjects which are marked, above. Thus, their views will not be replicated in full in the ensuing discussion about the model of knowledge used in personnel work. Instead our focus of attention is on how the model relates to the information which was provided by our sample about their work, how they perform it, and how they obtain knowledge about it.

Discussion of Macro-level knowledge

Macro-level knowledge is not organizationally-based or controlled. Its constituent elements concern the wider field of employment-related matters which exist/are generated outside of the personnel practitioner's own employment, but which can/may affect his/her job.

National - Legislation

Guest and Kenny (1983) considered that current knowledge about legislation was "essential". This is perhaps not surprising, as the penalties for breaking laws can be substantial, and adverse publicity for an employer may result from media coverage of court or industrial tribunal cases. While legislation acts as a constraint on employers' actions, it can also be used as "a lever for action", an opportunity for personnel specialists to pursue legislation-related initiatives proactively (Guest and Kenny). Armstrong (1986) felt that personnel-related legislation provided "a genuinely codifiable and esoteric body of professional knowledge".

Our sample used their knowledge of legislation to prevent other managers from making 'bad' decisions, to "keep the company out of trouble", and to enhance their credibility with other managers. Sometimes this credibility was reinforced when personnel advice was ignored, and adverse outcomes materialised. The backing provided by the legislation was an external source of authority for personnel specialists, which increased the amount of power they could exert in their jobs. Knowledge about employment legislation was obtained from specialist publications, employers' associations, training courses/workshops, and contact with other personnel specialists. However, while it seems almost obligatory that personnel 'generalists' and industrial relations specialists should have at least a working knowledge of employment legislation, we can see that, in practice, practitioners in specialist activities may not need to know about all of it in order to do their jobs.

National - requirements of Government Departments

There is a continuing requirement for personnel departments to have an interface with government departments like the Department of Employment, the Department of Social Security, and the Health and Safety Executive, predominantly in connection with the administrative provisions set down by legislation.

Knowledge about relevant codes of practice, and the timing arrangements for statistical returns, including the forms/procedures required in connection with these, is essential for practitioners whose jobs include responsibility for them. It is arguable however, whether a recruitment specialist, for example,

needs to know how to calculate/process statutory redundancy pay, or how to calculate labour turnover statistics.

National - trades unions' strategies

It may be useful for practitioners who have a responsibility for industrial relations to take note of policy developments at national level in the trade union movement, as these may eventually determine the form of union claims locally.

National - economic policy

We have seen how the economic climate, in the form of economic depression, affected some of our sample, where redundancies and cost-pruning exercises were necessary features of their work. Where the climate is inflationary however, policy about suitable levels of pay settlements may be imposed by the government, which will constrain management-union negotiating relationships. Personnel practitioners therefore need to be aware that national trends in the economy may determine not only some of what they do in their work (making people redundant), but also how they do parts of it (capping wage settlements). A background knowledge of economics may therefore be useful in identifying trends.

Sector/industry

Regardless of whether his/her employer is in the public or the private sector, the personnel specialist requires up-to-date knowledge about the employment practices, terms and conditions of employment, payment systems and trades unions' initiatives within similar concerns. Our sample obtained information about these from industry/sector-specific publications, from their

networks of personnel specialist contacts, from regular meetings of industry/sector-specific personnel managers' groups, and/or from employers' associations/federations.

Personnel theory/skills/ 'best practice'

Personnel management requires specialised knowledge about the theory/skills/'best practice' involved in employment practices, recruitment/selection, rewards/benefits, employee/industrial relations, training and development, and social/behavioural science. Here, the description of 'specialised knowledge' follows Boyatzis (1982), and means knowledge which is usable.

Our sample gave clear indications in Chapter Nine, and earlier in this chapter, that the practical demands of their jobs largely determined the types of 'theoretical' knowledge they learned. They looked for knowledge which could be 'applied' in their jobs, and some indicated that theory which was impracticable or otherwise inappropriate in their own employment was literally of no use to them.

Admittedly, some of this last group were 'initial chooser' products of the 'old style' IPM syllabus described by Guest (1989) and Whittaker (1989). Yet the point appears worth making, as Shackleton and Taylor (1988) found it "disturbing" that their respondents thought the revised, more practical IPM syllabus was still too theoretical, and that a "generally negative attitude" was held about it. Our interview sample contained two IPM students who were studying the 'new' syllabus, and both of these expressed fairly strong views about the

difficulties they experienced in relating the theory they were learning to the jobs they were doing. Both were employed in 'generalist' personnel officer posts. It will be interesting to find out what the graduates of the Professional Management Foundation Course, launched in 1989, have to say about how well the course has fulfilled its intentions of providing both theory and practical skills.

We might expect that personnel specialists who are employed as 'generalists' would have a working knowledge of all of the activities which were listed above as specialised personnel knowledge. Guest and Kenny (1983) felt that the range and variety of techniques available to personnel managers made it "almost impossible to possess a comprehensive knowledge across more than a fairly narrow range of personnel activities".

We might reasonably ask here, whether 'comprehensive' is a word which can be used realistically in connection with our sample, over even a limited range of activities. Their knowledge about personnel work built up piece by piece, like a patchwork, mostly through learning experiences which were situation-specific/reactive. Further, the ways in which they updated their knowledge/skills appeared piecemeal. If we look at the group of interviewees who had not been on a training course for two years or more, for example, we may find reasons to query whether their personnel-specific knowledge was 'comprehensive'.

This group was 17% (18) of the interview sample, and seven were non-respondents who did not provide data about their methods of

updating knowledge. Of the 11 respondents, seven were 'generalists', and four were specialists; one in training, one in recruitment, and two in industrial relations. The following short case studies may give us reason to wonder how 'comprehensive' their knowledge was:

Case study - personnel officer, education

Age 49. HND and BSc in mechanical engineering. Entered personnel at age 36, following redundancy as engineering management consultant. Responsibility: "all personnel and IR matters". Learned on the job. Did not undertake IPM study. Had never studied social/behavioural science. Only course attended was 10 years prior to interview, "University Management". Updated knowledge by reading specialist publications 'occasionally', and by reading newspapers. Did not use other methods of updating knowledge.

Case study - personnel and training manager, textiles

Age 34. Entered personnel at 24, with diploma in commerce, which included employment law and computer studies. ITB course at entry. Learned personnel work by doing, and was tutored by superior. Did not undertake IPM study. Last course prior to interview was about statutory sick pay. Updated knowledge by 'occasionally' contacting external personnel specialists, and reading employers' association circulars. Never read textbooks, and seldom read specialist publications.

Case study - industrial relations officer, multi-products

Age 42. Entered IR aged 39; former work study engineer, member of Institute of Management Services. Had received no IR/personnel-specific training. Did not undertake IPM study. Had never studied social/behavioural science. Last course 13 years prior to interview, "Methods Times Measurement". Updated knowledge by contacting external personnel specialists and employers' association 'frequently', and by reading employers' association circulars. 'Occasionally' read specialist publications, never read textbooks.

From the two 'generalist' case studies, we have the idea that some personnel specialists may learn on the job, and continue to do the same things, in the same ways, for substantial periods of time. Unfortunately, these participants were not part of the

group whose senior executives were asked about personnel effectiveness, so a potentially useful insight is not available to us.

Social

These concern knowledge about social issues which have an interface with personnel work, and which may require policies/procedures to deal with them. Interviewees in distilling and newspaper publishing, for example, mentioned that alcoholism was a problem in their organizations/industries, and one personnel manager in electrical contracting mentioned both alcoholism and drug abuse.

The list of 'social' issues presented in our model was drawn from Personnel Today (1989: 16, 30 May; 13 June; 11 July). While that list contains various elements of knowledge which personnel specialists need not necessarily know about, unless the issues arise in their own employment, there is one which conceivably will affect all of them. This is demographic change in the 1990s, which will result in a declining population of young people, and a growth in the numbers of ageing ones. By 1994, the population aged 16 - 19 was expected to be 2.6 million, which was 1.1 million less than in 1982; yet only one in seven employers knew how large the downturn was likely to be (Atkinson, 1989).

Goetschin (1987:39) felt that employers had to assess their demographic structure to prevent future labour shortages. In this, they would retain older employees, for whom "training and

recycling will prove to be more and more important".

According to Storey and Sisson (1989:173) however, British employers had already failed to develop effective strategies for training and development, which those writers found to be "all the more worrying because of the incessant ticking of the demographic time-bomb". It would seem therefore, that personnel specialists should not only know about the issues involved in demographic change, but should also be aware of what they should be doing now, to ensure that their employers have an adequately trained labour force for the future.

Discussion about 'Local' knowledge

Organizational

It seems reasonable to suggest that as personnel specialists are employed in organizations, they should know as much as possible about the environments in which they work. Our senior executive interviewees thought that knowledge 'about the business' was as important, and for some, more important than any personnel-specific knowledge their personnel directors/departments had. 22% (21) of our practitioner interview sample held similar views.

Knowledge of the formal structure of the organization gives an indication of the formal power/authority held by constituent departments/functions. Personnel, for example, may be seen to have more political 'clout' in an organization which has a personnel director, than in one where the personnel officer reports to the production manager. We have seen however, from

the literature review in Chapter One, and the data about power and influence in Chapter Seven, that knowledge of the formal structure may say relatively little about how the organization actually works in connection with power use. It may however, be a useful 'fail- safe' mechanism which personnel specialists can use by calling on the formal authority of their own superiors to ensure that certain things are done/not done, if they are not of director status themselves.

The formal structure may determine whether or not a personnel specialist is involved in planning/developing corporate business strategy. This is probably more likely at director level.

Where specialists are not involved/consulted, they may still have to know about future plans to ensure that labour requirements are met at the right time.

Personnel specialists need to know about the economic climate prevailing in their own organizations, as this may dictate not only what is done by personnel, but how it is done. Poor economic performance may mean recruitment bans, cost-pruning and redundancies, for example, while growth may mean increased recruitment and training activities. Keep (1989) wrote that economic considerations and pressures "often had very profound effects" on the management of workforces. Practitioners may risk losing credibility if they pursue schemes/ideas which are out of tune with the economic realities of their employment.

One aspect of economic reality which affected our survey respondents was the budgetary control exerted by their employers.

There is therefore a good argument for personnel specialists having at least a background knowledge of finance/accounting. Armstrong (1989: 165-6) noted that "many of the functions and procedures of a modern management organization take the form of budgetary controls and financial monitoring systems", and he wondered whether personnel managers had sufficient knowledge of these "to exploit their problematic aspects as a means of intervention by the personnel profession".

Personnel specialists do of course need to know about policies and procedures other than financial ones. This will include knowledge of how to develop policies/procedures, as well as how to interpret and/or implement them. Personnel-specific policies/ procedures can provide a source of 'clout'/authority. Nevertheless, personnel specialists should be aware that some policies may become 'espoused' but never implemented because of lack of support from line management (Brewster and Richbell, 1982).

Achieving credibility with other managers may be difficult if the personnel specialist does not know much about the product/service which is produced by the organization, or about the technology and methods which are used in producing it. One of our personnel managers in engineering told us that line management thought personnel people were 'wets', if they did not know about these aspects of the business. Lack of knowledge in these areas therefore, can mean a loss of credibility for the

personnel practitioner. It can impinge also on the ability of a personnel specialist to do his/her job properly. Technical knowledge about the product, the production process and the skills it required were mentioned as essential by one recruitment officer in electronics, for example, as he needed to know about these before he could evaluate applicants' suitability for jobs.

As well as knowing about the work that is done in the organization, personnel specialists also need to know about the people who are doing it. This will include knowledge about the composition of the labour force by age, sex, skills level, job type, status, wage/salary system, and rates of absence, accidents and turnover. These types of information will normally be obtained from the personnel records. The nature of the workforce is also of importance here; interviewees in construction and in hotels reported that they employed casual and/or seasonal labour, whose attitudes towards work were also 'casual'. In the garment industry, with its predominantly female labour force, personnel work had a high welfare content. In one type of financial operation, the personnel officer felt stressed because the 'workers' were predominantly highly-remunerated graduate staff who dealt in money markets and shares, where they constantly made/got decisions quickly. They expected a similar approach from him.

Knowledge about the workforce, its expectations, and about the historical background to management-employee relations, may also

provide a useful insight into trades unions' strategies. Some of our interviewees who worked in organizations where relationships had been poor historically, felt that they were obliged to take an 'in between' role to improve the lines of communications between management and workers.

For some of our sample, knowing about the labour force did not normally mean meeting/talking to workers other than managers on a regular basis. Those who did make regular 'tours' in their work-places felt that their visibility on site improved communications. The remainder of the interviewees who saw employees tended to do so on a reactive basis, as a 'court of last resort', for the resolution of problems. Senior personnel practitioners with subordinate staff tended to have personal contact with non-personnel employees only when problems had reached what one manager called "critical mass", and several made the point that their greatest amount of contact was not with 'workers', but with other managers.

Knowing other managers, and about their attitudes, and relationships with each other was seen by some of our respondents to be essential to personnel work. These types of knowledge helped them to understand: the informal structure in their organizations; the amount of power personnel was perceived to have in comparison to other functions; and how to tailor their communications to best effect when they engaged in in-house politics. While 25% (24) of our interviewees said that they did not participate in political behaviour, it was interesting that

they used the same means to 'get their way' as those who said that they were 'political' in their work. Three used their credibility, and the remainder relied on reasoned argument, logic and persuasion. We might reasonably ask how realistic these interviewees were about their own behaviour/dealings with other managers, when one "sowed a seed and nurtured it", another used "coercion" when necessary, two others used their superiors' authority if the situation demanded it, and so on. Guest and Kenny (1983) felt that an understanding of power and politics in organizations was "an essential prerequisite of effective personnel practice at all levels".

Personnel specialists also require to be aware of the philosophy/ies prevalent in their organizations, as these can have an effect on behavioural norms and management styles. An awareness of these can help the personnel practitioner to act in a way that is appropriate (or seen to be appropriate) in the organization. These aspects are however, only part of the knowledge which is required about the organization's 'culture', if we follow Sorge's (1985) argument about culture being everything to do with a social grouping, not just ways of thinking and acting.

The literature review in Chapter Two discussed the matter of role in personnel work, and showed this to be an aspect of specialist activity which was sometimes problematic and ambiguous. We might reasonably wonder how much control personnel specialists have over the roles which they perform in

their organizations, and how much is influenced by others' expectations of what personnel should be doing, and the way(s) it should be done. It seems sensible to suggest however, that personnel specialists should understand the role that is expected of them. If they feel that the organization would be better served by a different role model, they may possibly use their political and 'cultural' knowledge to their advantage in persuading influential/powerful others to accept change. 58% (63) of our interviewees actively rejected the idea of the ambiguous 'in between' role. We can see that personnel specialists who know where they stand on the matter of role will have more credibility with others, than if they are inconsistent/not quite sure.

Geographical locale

Personnel specialists should know about external labour markets: in and around the geographical locations of their employment, this will mean acquiring knowledge about the traditions and norms of the local workforce, the availability of skilled/other labour, and the employment practices of local employers. These types of knowledge, for example, had immediate practical use for one personnel manager in a 'green field' Japanese electronics company. The level of unemployment in the area was high, due to the closure of/redundancies in local heavy engineering companies and coalmines. The pool of labour available to the company had had no experience of repetitive production-line work. While the company could train its operatives in the technical aspects of the work, problems were experienced with the attitudes of the

labour force being at odds with what was expected of them by their Japanese management. Part of the difficulty arose because the plant was non-union, and the workers had been used to unionised environments. The personnel manager found that his local knowledge was invaluable, not only in explaining the reasons for problems to his management, but also in determining appropriate approaches/course of action in relation to the workforce. Our interviewees obtained information about local wages/conditions and so on from other personnel specialists in their areas, by telephone and/or by attending meetings of local personnel managers' groups.

Personal

Guest and Kenny (1983) suggested that the skills required by personnel managers were diagnostic, analytical, statistical, interpersonal, and political. These have been included here as 'personal' knowledge, because the personnel specialist requires to have a good understanding of where his/her own strengths and weaknesses lie, in all of these. Some of our interviewees, for example, said that their strengths were verbal rather than mathematical, and that they had chosen personnel as career for this reason. Former engineers and chemists felt that their backgrounds were assets in analysing problems. While all managerial work (and arguably any other kind of work as well) requires interpersonal skills, some of our interviewees found that they did not like interacting with others, to the extent that some of them felt permanently stressed by this aspect of their jobs. While deficiencies in the skills noted above may be

identified in performance appraisals, and subsequently improved by training, we might wonder whether political skills would be 'officially' addressed in these ways. Our senior executives, for example, seemed anxious to discourage political activity in their organizations. Young (1987) however, felt that "responsible political actions...serve corporate purposes", and managers should therefore be involved in formal programmes which would teach them political behaviour, hone their political skills, and help them to recognise and solve political problems. It seemed sensible to provide such training, as political skills were used at different stages of agreement processes in which managers would necessarily be involved: in fact-finding, conciliation, mediation, negotiation and representation.

Identity

Possibly self-knowledge/analysis may be a difficult thing to achieve, for it concerns a person's identity, an awareness of what he/she is, and personal perceptions of self (cf. Cotgrove and Box, 1970). Some of our interviewees had a very strong sense of how their identity, manifested in part by their personalities, helped them in their jobs. They said that they used their personalities to get what they wanted in their interactions with others, to increase the amount of power they had, and to make sure that their jobs developed in ways which were beneficial to them.

Summary of the model of knowledge used in personnel work

The model of knowledge use which had been presented here has

described types of knowledge which personnel specialists can, but may not necessarily, hold as 'accounts' in their 'knowledge banks'. Clearly, with the diversity of both personnel work in practice, which we saw in Chapter Five, and of our respondents' backgrounds (Chapter Four), we may expect that not only will there be a considerable variation in the types of 'accounts' held, but also in the amounts of knowledge banked in each 'account'. Thus, the idea of a 'body' of knowledge in the personnel occupation does not seem to be an appropriate or adequate one for describing the knowledge practitioners use.

Interviewees' perceptions of the IPM

Before we look at some ideas about the training of personnel specialists, we shall consider what our interviewees thought of the IPM, for indications which will be useful in connection with training. The interviewees were asked why they were/were not members of the IPM. Somewhat surprisingly, lengthy narratives ensued, and it was soon apparent that the IPM had not achieved much popularity amongst our sample. Criticisms came from both members and non-members. Incisive and sometimes caustic observations were received from Fellows and Companions of the Institute, as well as Associates, Members, and Students. These criticisms concerned: the ability of the IPM to represent the occupation, the standard/content of meetings, the illusion of professionalism it presented, its attitude towards 'late entrant' practitioners who wished to join, and the standard and content of IPM courses.

It was clear that some interviewees did not much like the IPM's attitude towards examinations and membership:

"...I lectured to IPM students, in IR, psychology and personnel management, for a number of years. So I thought I'd become a member of the IPM. This dragon in charge of membership told me I wouldn't get in with a lot of exemptions, and only two exams. I'd actually have to sit four exams., and I wasn't prepared to do that. Call it pique if you like, but that's why I'm not in the IPM" (Personnel Officer, aged 35, 10 years' personnel experience);

"I was a member of the IPM, under the old experience provisions. I felt at that time that their attitude towards unqualified people was bad. In a sense, they were elitist, and they still say that you're not good enough if you have 25 years' experience - but you are good enough if you've passed the exams! I objected to that, and left. However, in hindsight, coming out was a bad decision, and a silly thing to do, as I cannot now get back in. I tried to re-join, and they wouldn't have me - which is no more than I deserve...in hindsight, I should have stayed in, and tried to change things from the inside" (Personnel Manager, aged 42, 21 years' personnel experience).

These would appear to be the types of people whom Whittaker (1989) described, who were caught by the "new regime" of 'examination entry only' which started in the 1970s, and which "became associated with harsh, arbitrary inflexible rules and regulations [and which are] still referred to with bitterness by some of its 'victims' even today". These interviewees, and others like them, would now be eligible to enter the IPM through the Management Entry facility described in the 'Membership Eligibility Criteria' provisions (IPM, 1990b).

Tyson and Fell (1986: 54) felt that the level of membership in the IPM at June 1984 meant that "IPM membership must account for only around a half of all those performing some kind of personnel function...indeed, the position may be worse than

that". 24% (55) of our study's respondents, and 33% (36) of its interviewees were IPM members. The interview responses to the question, "Why are you a member of the IPM?" are shown below in Table 10.2 .

Table 10.2

Reasons for being a member of the IPM

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Wanted a relevant qualification	20	56
For the contacts/information	8	22
Because it makes me marketable	7	19
My boss thought I should have it	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>36</u>	<u>100</u>

56% (20) felt that as they had come into/were intending to enter personnel, they should have the relevant professional qualification:

"...I was a late entrant to personnel, at 30, and I came in almost at the top. I suppose the proper reason for doing the IPM is the need to acquire knowledge and information. My need was to get the right kind of professional credentials to do the job..."

(Personnel Director, Public Sector Development);

"...I was looking for something different out of the IPM than others who did the same course. Most were graduates, and were looking for a practical-based course, whereas I had practical experience, and was more interested in the theory..."

(Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"...I've been a member of the IPM for many years, for two reasons - the knowledge and skills related to personnel management, and the value of the qualification in the promotion stakes. In the early years, the second was more important than the first. I rarely attend meetings. I've been very disappointed by the standard of the content of the meeting not reaching my expectation (why I went in the first place). Too often, it's academics on a soapbox, and not a practical discussion of real problems..."

(Training Officer, Public Sector, Energy);

"...I started in the IPM as being 'good for the job'. I don't go to meetings, but I read the publications. Many articles are above my head. Often, the articles are geared to specialists, and are not 'people-oriented', or for 'grass-roots' personnel management..."

(Personnel and Training Mgr., Garment manufacture);

"...I was a late entrant to the IPM. It was a direct response to an improvement in IPM credibility. I didn't hold it in high regard, previously..."

(Senior Industrial Relations Officer, Local government);

"The IPM sets itself up as a professional body - so if you are a practitioner in personnel, you'd normally want to be associated with the Institute. I'm less convinced it has a positive role in representing the personnel profession. ...My experience of the IPM is of a rather pedantic, almost anachronistic organization..."

(Personnel Director, Fellow of the IPM).

22% (8) thought that the information and contacts provided by membership was the most important aspect of being in the IPM:

"I'm a Companion of the Institute, and have been on the National Council. The contacts are very important. Your job in personnel management is not to know everything - it's to know how to find it..."

(Personnel Manager, Heavy engineering);

"...I 'phone round for information. We have a network now..."

(Personnel Officer, Public Sector Development, IPM student).

19% (7) felt that they would be more marketable with an IPM qualification, which was regarded as a useful addition for "the C.V.":

"I joined the IPM because most job advertisements have an IPM requirement - but I don't believe there is a correlation between membership of the IPM and an ability to do the job. Just because someone is a Fellow of the IPM doesn't mean to say he can do his job any better than I do"

(Personnel Officer, Electronics).

One interviewee took the IPM qualification because it was recommended to him by his immediate superior, who was an IPM member.

Watson (1977:136) suggested that when people joined the IPM to get a qualification/training, or to help their career, they exhibited career instrumentalism; and when they sought to obtain useful contacts and information, they showed situation instrumentalism. In short, IPM membership was "useful".

The frequency table of reasons why interviewees were not IPM members is shown below in Table 10.3 .

Table 10.3

Reasons why interviewees were not members of the IPM

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Am a success without it	15	21
Not beneficial to me	10	14
Organization does not require it	9	12
IPM not attractive	9	12
Practical experience is better	5	7
Didn't finish IPM course	5	7
Employer would not allow day-release	5	7
Dislike part-time study	4	5
Dispute with IPM about membership	4	5
Other	4	5
Am not going to stay in personnel	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	<u>73</u>	<u>99</u>

There was a wide range of responses, and 66% (48) of these were about ways in which the IPM was not useful to the interviewees. 21% (15) felt that they were successful in personnel without the qualification:

"...I've got where I am without it"
(Colliery Personnel Manager, Coal);

"...I came into personnel management from production. I didn't know whether I wanted a career in personnel, so I didn't study for the IPM. I didn't feel it would help me, once I'd got this job. It was of a level not to need the IPM"

(Personnel Manager, Finance).

14% (10) thought that IPM membership would not benefit them, and their reasons for this were predominantly concerned with their perceptions of the inability of the qualification to enhance their job prospects and/or to help them to do their jobs better.

12% (9) had not pursued IPM membership because their employers had not required it:

"...none of the personnel people in this company are in the IPM..." (Personnel Manager, Insurance);

"...staff management here is viewed as part of stores management" (Personnel Manager, Multiple retailing).

12% (9) felt that the IPM held no attraction for them:

"...I don't believe in closed bodies, and am turned off by specialist meetings" (Personnel Manager, Electrical engineering);

"...it is trying to create an illusion of professionalism. The IPM is trying, erroneously, to create a standard. It can't create a 'chartered' personnel status - it's impossible to do that..." (Personnel Officer, Defence electronics);

"...I didn't bother to join. You're better going to the Industrial Society - they're real practitioners. The IPM is not geared up to practical answers. It's fuddy-duddy" (Personnel Manager, Pharmaceuticals);

"The Institute doesn't interest me. I attended meetings, but the people were divorced from reality. I didn't find the topics relevant..." (Personnel Manager, Heavy engineering).

This manager had completed two years of a three-year part-time MBA course, and anticipated that once he had obtained his MBA, he might perhaps consider applying for IPM membership, "for the letters after my name - and only if I get a lot of exemptions".

7% (5) thought that practical experience outweighed the IPM qualification in terms of performing their jobs:

"...in life, the qualification doesn't give you the capability to do the work..."
(Industrial Relations & Training Officer, Vehicle manuf.).

7% (5) had started IPM study, but had not completed the course, four of these because of the difficulties they experienced in accommodating both work and part-time study, and one because the course was discontinued by his local college before he could take the examinations.

7% (5) had local IPM courses which were only available on day-release, and their employers would not allow them time off work. A further 5% (4) had access to part-time study in the evenings, but disliked the idea of studying after a full working day.

5% (4) had wanted to join the IPM, and three of these disliked being told to "go away and study"; they did not then pursue the matter. One other had completed a one-year post-graduate personnel course, but did not gain IPM membership from it because of a dispute between her college and the Institute about course content.

5% (4) gave 'other' reasons for not joining the IPM, which were, variously; lack of ambition, never having thought of it, being too old on entry to personnel, and

"...no particular reasons...just circumstances, like everybody else"
(Personnel Manager, Public Sector, Energy).

This section has presented reasons why late entrants may not wish to study for an IPM qualification, and the implications of these findings will be discussed further in the section about training, which follows shortly. In the meantime however, we shall look at some criticisms of IPM courses. The comments which follow are about the content of the 'new' and 'practical' IPM syllabus which was described by Whittaker (1989) and Guest (1989), and about standards of course teaching:

"...the theories are thrown at you..."
 (Personnel Officer, Wire goods, speaking about social/behavioural science);

"...it was very theoretical, and it was difficult to relate theory to practice..."
 (Senior Personnel Officer, Public Sector, speaking about social/behavioural science);

"...it worries me that IPM theories can't be tied to the practicalities. They go overboard on the theory of the legislation, but not on how to go about doing it - for example, how to negotiate. Some of my staff are doing the IPM, and show me the exam papers. They debate the law. That's not relevant to personnel management practice"
 (Assistant IR Manager, Coal);

"...We have students on day-release for IPM courses at two colleges. I have had a lot of complaints about the standard of the courses. The standard of lectures is abominable...I had to write to the colleges, complaining on behalf of the students..."
 (Personnel Manager, Telecommunications);

"...I stopped attending two classes, because they were so bad..." (Personnel Officer, NHS);

"...the college is useless for the IPM. There is bad administration, and bad lecturing. The guy who runs it is a nit..."
 (Personnel Officer, Whisky bottling plant).

Five Scottish educational establishments were named in connection with poor/unsatisfactory standards of lecturing.

Training for personnel work

"...How do you train somebody to do personnel work?
They don't train people to do this kind of work.
And once you are in the job, how do you get trained
to do it any better?"

(Staff manager, Oil).

These are important questions about training for personnel work, and this section will address them in the context of the information our survey respondents and interviewees have provided about their backgrounds, their entry to personnel, and their learning/training experiences.

In Chapter Four, we found that our respondents entered personnel through a variety of routes, and that they could be grouped into 'initial choosers' and 'late entrants'. There appeared to be an increasing tendency for initial choosers to enter personnel with a degree and/or an IPM qualification.

In Chapter Nine, it was found that both the IPM-qualified initial choosers and the late entrants had training needs which were generally addressed by learning 'on the job'. These needs were distinctly different for each group at entry. While IPM-qualified initial choosers had a background of theory, they did not have the practical skills necessary for the work. The late entrants had diverse experience from their former occupations, but little or no personnel-specific theoretical knowledge. What one group had at entry, the other appeared to lack.

Once each group had acquired the knowledge/skills which enabled them to function as personnel specialists, there was a common

requirement to keep abreast of developments in personnel work. Our study did not collect the types of data necessary to ascertain how successful the sample was in doing this. In Chapter Nine, however, it was possible to say that formal courses/training did not play a large part in updating personnel-specific knowledge/skills, and that the methods which were used for updating appeared to be haphazard. It seemed also that as formal training was generally situation-specific and often reactive, there was the possibility that some personnel practitioners may perform some aspects of their jobs with knowledge/skills which have not been updated for quite some time, if at all. While this may not be a disaster in terms of their day-to-day operations, the possibility arises that some practitioners may be making sub-optimal decisions because they are not aware of the full range of choices available to them (see Guest and Kenny, 1983: 7).

The somewhat depressing picture which emerged from Chapter Nine was that most of our sample were not systematically trained by their employers, and that very few of the interviewees felt they were being 'developed'. While learning 'on the job' was a valuable source of knowledge and skills, it was also insufficient, and needed to be supported by formal/structured learning episodes and training (cf. Burgoyne, 1983; Mumford, 1987b).

Only 14% (16) of our sample felt that they were being developed in these ways. Eleven of these thought that they were being

'groomed' for posts with greater responsibility. For the rest of the sample, however, formal training was generally ad hoc.

Tyson and Fell (1986) wished to see more personnel specialists with both line management experience and a 'broad' management training, and they wrote about an "ideal profile for personnel specialists", which was "a degree or diploma-level course in the social sciences followed by training in management".

It was suggested in Chapter Three, that this 'ideal profile' might be difficult to achieve in practice. The data which have been reported here about occupational entry, and attitudes towards both IPM qualifications and social/behavioural science, support this argument, particularly in connection with our late entrants.

While initial choosers with personnel-specific/social and or behavioural science qualifications may possibly be able to fulfil the 'ideal profile', their success in this would appear to be dependent on their first employers being willing to give them the opportunity of gaining experience in line functions. It seems sensible to suggest that this may be a more feasible proposition in say, service sectors than in technical and/or engineering and/or otherwise specialized ones; and a more difficult prospect in organizations which do not have a 'general traineeship' mode of graduate induction.

There is a real difficulty, however, in accommodating the notion of the 'ideal profile' for late entrants to personnel work.

Already experienced in other occupations, many of them gave what they felt were good reasons for not pursuing specialist study. These included, variously; coming into personnel at managerial level, not being prepared to study in their own time, not seeing a specialist qualification as useful/beneficial, and finding the idea of specialist qualifications and/or organizations unattractive. Those who did take the IPM examinations did so mainly for "the letters on the C.V.", and because they felt their job prospects would be enhanced. Only one late entrant specifically mentioned that obtaining theory was her main motivation for undertaking IPM study in mid-career.

Further, we might wonder how committed late entrants would be in undertaking study specifically in the field of social science, when they did not express much interest in the IPM qualification which includes social science. Although we saw earlier in this chapter that 84% (87) of the interview sample thought that social or behavioural science was relevant in some way to personnel work, only 23% (25) felt that these sciences (but predominantly behavioural science) were "very relevant". The responses about social/behavioural science were often qualified with reference to lack of practicality.

While psychological approaches achieved a measure of approval, it was interesting that the graduates in psychology did not think that this educational/theoretical background was of benefit to them in performing their jobs. One of the psychology graduates was a late entrant to personnel, and he said that he

was "only now seeing the benefit" of his degree. This insight however, had been obtained during his current course of MBA study. We may ask here whether this was because the psychology tuition he received in his MBA classes was different in some way, perhaps in its work-specific content, than his undergraduate course. It is worth noting however, that this interviewee also felt that practicality was an issue, and that the benefit of his educational background was that it gave him the knowledge to evaluate social/behavioural science-based approaches critically, with a view to practice.

It would appear that if writers are to suggest that personnel specialists should have social science degrees/diplomas, they will have to be very sure that the social science teaching which is available throughout the country is adequate/suitable for its purpose of management education. Our interviewees have stated clearly what that purpose is/should be: they want theoretical content which is rendered in an intelligible form, and which they can relate to the reality of their work, both conceptually and in practice. It was apparent from their accounts that they did not get this, even under the 'new' IPM syllabus.

It seems sensible to suggest that academic social/behavioural scientists who contribute to higher vocational education might take note of what is required by their 'market'. We may reasonably question whether academic integrity must necessarily be compromised by the idea that the purpose of teaching social/

behavioural sciences in management education is not to blind/alienate the audience with jargon-bound 'scientific' theory, but to open their eyes to the possibilities of using it (Glover and Kelly, 1987). As our senior executive and practitioner interviewees have shown, however, existing prejudices against these sciences may be substantial ones to overcome, especially in older managers who have had little/no/unsatisfactory previous experience of them.

While writers about personnel management may feel pressured to produce suggestions in connection with training for the occupation, the findings of this study have presented two strong contra-indications to the feasibility of doing so in viable ways. First, the preponderance of late entrants, with their diverse pre-personnel occupational experience, cannot realistically be accommodated in proposals intended for the occupation generally. This is partly for the reasons which were outlined earlier in connection with Tyson and Fell's (1986) 'ideal profile', and partly because their training needs on entry to personnel vary according to the amount of personnel-specific training they have obtained in previous jobs.

Second, there is the problem of accommodating the diversity of personnel work as it exists in practice. In our consideration of this, we are almost forced to take on board the idea that 'state of the art' personnel management may not, realistically, be possible in practice; if employers have personnel

departments at all, they will have the type of function and the activities which they think are appropriate for their organizations (Syrett, 1987). Even if top managers are not entirely clear about what they want from personnel, they are likely to know what they do not want (Foulkes, 1975). Our senior executive interview data in Chapter Seven gave some indication of what this may mean in practice; they talked of practical managers who were not theory-bound, and who were attuned to the needs of the organization and its objectives.

Yet, there have been clear indications that in the past, training for personnel work has not been optimal. Our study findings have indicated that much personnel training is conducted on a piecemeal basis. Nearly two-thirds of Shackleton and Taylor's (1988) sample felt that personnel managers lacked training, and Collinson (1988: 3) found that "even many personnel managers had not been trained in selection and interviewing methods".

It could be, however, that we are not taking a wide enough perspective when we isolate our specialists' training in the context of what happened to them once they had entered personnel. In this study, 69% (158) of the respondents were late entrants to personnel, and it seems that if we approach the matter of their training solely from the point of view of their specialist activity, we may be in danger of examining only the piece of the iceberg which is visible above the water.

The enormity of what may lie beneath may only be ascertained by

taking a closer look at the personnel-specific training our late entrants received before they entered personnel. As personnel management is part of all managers' jobs, it would not be unreasonable to expect that personnel-specific training would have featured in the pre-entry knowledge responses of interviewees who had been in managerial jobs before their entry to personnel; yet it did not. While ten people mentioned personnel-typical activities; training (4), interviewing (3), job evaluation (2), and a knowledge of employment law gained through being a TU convenor (1), none of these were expressed in the context of knowing about any other areas of personnel work at entry, and only four mentioned formal training; one in interviewing, one in training, and two in job evaluation. It is perhaps a little worrying that the following extracts typify the experiences of our late entrants who said they had not encountered personnel-related work before entry to the specialism:

"...I had supervisory experience in the company. I had no IR experience...I learned on the job from my manager..."
(former industrial engineer, IR & Training Officer, Vehicles);

"...I had to run hard to become involved in all the facets of the work...it was 'on the job', at the sharp end..."
(former pensions administrator, Personnel Mgr, Engineering);

"...[I have worked in personnel for nine months], and this is my first appointment...part of my work in the inspection department involved interviewing people, but I had no training - no, none"
(Assistant Staff Manager, Banking).

Widening our perspective further still, to include our interviewees' perceptions of other managers in their organizations, it was apparent that others' ignorance of, and/or

prejudice against, personnel work made some of our practitioners' lives difficult; we were told that our interviewees' political/influencing skills were used largely to persuade others to courses of action which should have been pursued from the outset, in accordance with relevant legislation and/or procedures. We might ask here if at least some of those confrontations could have been avoided, if the other managers had received adequate personnel-related training.

Recent research has shown that our 'iceberg' of deficiencies in personnel-specific training is one which has its origins in a much greater mass; that of management training in Britain, which Handy (1987: 11) described as "too little, too late, for too few". Historically, Britain had "low levels" of education and training (Keep, 1989: 125). Keep felt that, even if there was an immediate and dramatic improvement in training provision for managers, it would take quite some time to achieve effects, due to "the scale of the backlog of training needs".

In the latter sections of Chapters One and Three, we discussed the Management Charter Initiative (MCI), and the background to its development, in the context of its potential contribution to training/developing managers in the skills of managerial work as well as 'POSDCORB'-type theory. Sadler (1989: 238) felt that;

"If education and training are to be more than a ritualistic act of faith, they need to be tailored to the nature of managerial work both in the sense of the content of managers' jobs and the characteristic processes by which these jobs are performed".

While the criteria outlined by Sadler appear to have been addressed in the MCI proposals, Keep (1989) was sceptical about the "fairly rudimentary provisions" of the MCI code of practice, and he observed that while these had "been hailed as a landmark in British management education and training", this praise only reflected "the paucity of what has gone before". Burgoyne (1988) was also sceptical about the "new vision", because it focussed "too much on the individual...and too little [on] the organization as a whole".

Sadler (1989) felt that "managers must be motivated to learn. This state of mind is quite different from merely being willing to be taught". Yet, if we take Burgoyne's (1988) reservations about the MCI on board, we might reasonably ask how much of this motivation will be generated actively by employers, and how much will derive from managers' desire for a portable qualification which may enhance their prospects for job mobility. The writer recalls a recent conversation with a Scottish industrialist, during which he made the point that where organizations such as his own did systematically train/develop staff, they ran the risk of 'poaching' by others, a loss which smaller organizations could not easily sustain. In this, we have the idea of an investment turning into a cost. Further, we can see the possibility that employers who do not already provide training/development schemes may use the 'cost' argument to justify their lack of action on the training front.

Money is inevitably an issue in connection with training and

development, and some research has shown that British employers generally have not been too anxious to spend it. The NEDO/MSC (1984) report showed that the training budgets of leading companies in West Germany, Japan and America were approximately 3% of their turnover. The comparative figure in Britain was 0.15% (MCS, 1985: 23).

Our thinking about management education and training may benefit from international comparisons other than financial ones.

Historically, management in English-speaking countries has been conducted in ways which have been shown by empirical researchers in managerial work to be fragmented, episodic and reactive (see Chapter One). The work of Lawrence (1980) can be interpreted as suggesting that we should pause to query whether brevity, variety and fragmentation were descriptions of badly-organised Anglo-Saxon management, as it shows how German managers planned chaos and crisis out of their work (cf. Glover, 1991).

Thompson and McHugh (1990) felt that British managers may have much to learn about management and organization from Japan, especially in connection with flexibility. This may mean flexibility in ways of thinking, as well as in management practices. Mant (1969) felt that managerial work required "mental flexibility", which was "probably more important than sheer intelligence (however measured) or educational level".

Other writers have suggested that British attitudes towards education for management-level work have been myopic, so that thinking about it has largely built on what has gone before,

without pausing to consider whether the basic premises, the foundations, of that thinking were the right ones. Glover (1980) felt that in Britain, the idea that a broad education and the capability for critical thought could coexist with technical or other specialised knowledge, had not taken root to the same extent as it had in Western Europe.

It is worth considering whether broadly-educated technocrats can be produced from British management educational practices, which tend to concentrate on job-holders once they have become managers. Although Handy's (1987) comment of "too little, too late" referred to management training, it appears to be an appropriate description also for most of higher vocational education. Thus there has been some suggestion that British systems of secondary and tertiary education have not traditionally been designed to produce managers. Fores and Glover (1978) pointed to the deficiencies of the education system in Britain in this regard, and they argued for more useful specialist/vocational education at both secondary and tertiary level. The German system of full-time education, for example, provides education which is both broad and specialised and which incorporates what we in Britain would call 'training' (Child et al., 1983).

British institutions and attitudes may also have a part to play; the professional qualifying associations in Britain have few counterparts in Germany or other countries in continental Europe. Child et al. (1983) queried whether the existence of

professions in Britain had not contributed to its poor economic performance over a substantial period of time. Perhaps then, a warning bell might ring, when we learn that the MCI and the Professional Management Foundation Course will provide 'professional' management qualifications. We might also question whether chartered status for managers is not a self-conscious attempt to aggrandise a diverse range of occupations into the single 'profession' of management. Personnel management is of course, no stranger to the fight of being seen as 'professional'. It would seem however, that if the IPM did not win this in one way, with its own qualification, it hopes to win in another, with its support for the Professional Management Foundation Course.

We cannot presume that the MCI and the Professional Management Foundation Course will provide satisfactory solutions to the backlog of training needs in Britain, which were discussed by Keep (1989). Indeed, in their first years these training/education initiatives will only be of benefit to the organizations and the managers who participate in them. We might reasonably wonder whether the 'charter companies' are those which would have provided training/development for their staff in any event. If this is indeed the case, and we do not as yet know whether it is, we may ask the further question of what is happening in the organizations which have not supported the MCI. Britain's poor record in management education and training, noted by Fores and Glover (1978), and recently confirmed by Handy (1987) and Constable and McCormick (1987), give

us reasonable grounds to be cautious in our expectations about organizations which remain outside the network of charter companies.

In Scotland, it is possible that those organizations which are reticent about investing in employee development may be stimulated into action with the encouragement of Scottish Enterprise, an initiative launched in the spring of 1991, following the merger of the Scottish Development Agency and the Training Agency. Baur (1991:2) suggested that "the reason for welding these two organizations together is pretty plain":

"...in an increasingly competitive international environment, it simply won't do any longer to continue divorcing the country's drive for economic regeneration from the development of its most important resource, its people. Skill and brainpower are today's primary assets in the community's drive to modernise itself".

Scotland's economic, environmental and human resource development in the 1990's will be accomplished through an integrated network of Scottish Enterprise and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). According to the business plan of one of these, Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Limited (LEEL);

"The impact upon the level and quality of investment in training will be the principal measure of Scottish Enterprise success. LEEL will be adopting new and innovative approaches in this area, including addressing the issue of women returners, skills enhancement and retraining of workers, and management education and development...".

The objectives of Scottish Enterprise have been widely publicised, and they provide an 'official' endorsement of the idea that the effective management of human resources can

benefit not only organizations, but also the national economy. This type of legitimation for their activities may work to the advantage of personnel specialists in Scotland, as their new-found centrality could be the key to increased power and/or influence. Further, it lends strength to the argument that personnel practitioners should themselves be adequately trained before they proceed with the recruitment, training and development of others.

Conclusions

Chapter Ten has looked at: the relevance of social/behavioural science to personnel work; a model of knowledge used in the personnel occupation; interviewees' perceptions of having an IPM/occupation-specific qualification; and finally, some ideas about the training of personnel specialists, discussed in the wider context of management education and training in Britain.

The focus of this chapter has been one of practicality and usefulness. It was clear in the section about social/behavioural science that while 87% (84) of our practitioners were willing to give varying degrees of support to the idea that it was relevant to personnel management, their approval was qualified in connection with practicality/being able to use social/behavioural science-based ideas in their own organizations. The question arose of why interviewees who had some knowledge of the social and/or behavioural sciences from their IPM and/or undergraduate courses could not connect the theory they had learned with the work which they were required

to do.

The behavioural sciences were mentioned more often than social science approaches, and psychologistic ones appeared to be the most popular. Often however, these were expressed in what Watson (1977) termed a "folk-concept of psychology", in narratives which involved people 'ticking', and so on.

If we review the interview extracts about social/behavioural science, there appears to be a second undercurrent apart from the one about practicality; there is an impression that some of our participants thought social/behavioural science was relevant because they had been told/had read that it was. We might possibly wonder how relevant they would have thought it if it had not been presented proactively in IPM courses and its monthly magazine. 20% (21) of our interviewees said that they did not know much about social/behavioural science, and 3% (3) felt that it was of very little or no relevance to personnel work.

The second section of this chapter presented a model of knowledge used in personnel, which was discussed in connection with the idea that our thinking about knowledge in the occupation may benefit from an understanding of what happens at practitioner level. It was suggested that if we understood this, it would be apparent why there was difficulty in identifying a 'body' of knowledge in personnel management.

Further, it was suggested that each practitioner has a

'knowledge bank' in which he/she operates 'accounts'. This concept accommodates the diversity of personnel management in practice, and practitioners' pre-personnel experience. Thus, we have the idea that personnel specialists will not all be operating the same portfolio of 'accounts', and that the amounts of knowledge, even in 'accounts' which may be commonly held (e.g. employment legislation), may vary according to the requirements of practitioners' jobs.

The interviewees who were members of the IPM had joined/obtained the qualification showed the types of instrumentalism described by Watson (1977); they thought that they would have more 'professional' credibility, or that their future job prospects would be enhanced. The focus of our interest, however, was the group who were not in the IPM, and their reasons for this. These gave us reasonable grounds to suspect that late entrants may be reluctant to subscribe to any form of personnel-specific qualification course which entails studying in their own time, especially if they feel that their job level/previous experience precludes the requirement to study, and/or they feel that study would not benefit them materially, and/or they are in personnel as a temporary placement.

The final section of this chapter looked at the training of personnel specialists in connection with the data which had been reported in Chapter Nine, and this one. There were clear indications that the training needs of initial choosers and late entrants at entry were identifiably different, and these

pointed to the inadvisability of trying to prescribe 'ideal profile' approaches which were intended to apply to the personnel occupation generally. While these might possibly be feasible in connection with initial choosers, there was a real difficulty in accommodating late entrants.

This last observation led to the suggestion that our perceptions of training for the personnel specialism may be limited, if we isolate late entrants' training in the context of what happens to them once they enter personnel. Our late entrants' hurried acquisition of personnel-specific knowledge/skills was the result of little/no training in these matters in their previous occupations.

Finally, it seemed sensible to broaden our discussion about training to include some ideas about management education and training in Britain. That discussion made some international comparisons, and it queried whether Britain was capable of producing the kind of broadly-educated technocrat-manager who was to be found in Europe, especially as our systems of secondary and tertiary education still did not always accommodate the idea that education could be both broad and specialised. It would appear therefore, that until such fundamental issues are addressed, training initiatives like the MCI and the Professional Management Foundation Course are merely attempts to close the stable door after the horse has bolted.

CHAPTER ELEVEN : CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has looked at personnel management as part of management-level work. One of its two central themes has been the work that personnel specialists do, and how they do it. The second and no less important one was the nature and types of knowledge and skills practitioners use in their jobs, and how these are obtained.

In order to understand the context of personnel work in practice, the study explored the topics of power and influence, and perceptions of effectiveness, status and role, matters which have received particular attention in specialist writings about personnel management. These issues are facets of the context in which personnel work is performed, as much as any other factors such as sector/industry, product/service, culture, and so on. Thus, data were obtained about the respondents'/interviewees' organizations which might explain how the actions and experiences of practitioners are affected by relevant contingency factors. This approach included an examination of their political behaviour.

Some of the data strongly suggest that it may be inadvisable to think about personnel practitioners as a homogeneous group. The study participants worked in a diverse range of organizations, and they came from a wide variety of occupational and educational backgrounds (Chapter Four). Further, personnel work was shown in Chapter Five to be so varied, both in terms of the types of tasks, and the extent of the respondents' involvement in

them, that its nature was described as kaleidoscopic.

These findings cast doubt on the existence of the 'typical' personnel specialist, and they may in part explain why the interviewees found difficulty in relating the theory which they had learned from courses and/or textbooks to the reality of their work. Thus, the findings confirmed points made by various other writers about the diversity/heterogeneity of the work and its practitioners, and the inappropriateness of prescriptive approaches in literature about the personnel occupation (cf. Guest and Horwood, 1980; Guest and Kenny, 1983; Tyson and Fell, 1986).

The findings in Chapter Four about modes of entry showed that Watson's (1977) typology of entry was valid, but incomplete.

Five additional sub-modes were found:

<u>MODE</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL SUB-MODE</u>
Employee-initiated (positive)	Career-pause (positive) Self-development
Employee-initiated (negative)	Career-pause (negative)
Organization-initiated	Compulsory job-expansion Compulsory placement

Evidence on how practitioners update their knowledge and skills led us to question the part which textbooks play in personnel work. Some of the interviewees were eager to speak about the types of knowledge they did not obtain from books, although it is not entirely clear whether this was to justify not reading them, or whether their views grew out of a more widespread prejudice against academic knowledge. There appeared to be an

undercurrent of the latter, especially in the late entrants' interview responses about taking an IPM qualification.

The findings about late entrants' training needs at entry, and their reluctance to pursue study (unless for the instrumental reasons of enhancing job prospects and/or gaining credibility), led to the suggestion that Tyson and Fell's (1986) 'ideal profile' of training for personnel work may not be a realistic one in practice.

Further research is necessary to ascertain viable ways of providing late entrants with useful knowledge, information and skills. Thinking about possible approaches to learning for them may benefit from the finding that the respondents preferred work which was interactive to routine administration. Thus, they might be more attracted to learning experiences which are interactive, rather than approaches which are based largely on books.

Our respondents' preference for interactive work is perhaps not surprising. It was familiar to them; talking to others was their most time-consuming duty, and a cause of fragmentation in their work. While the findings about managerial work confirmed its fragmented and verbal nature, they did not find that this was at the expense of 'POSDCORB'-type work and administrative duties. The effect of fragmentation was that these types of work were displaced from normal working hours into 'overtime' ones, when necessary.

In Chapter Six, it was found that the respondents' work involved interpersonal and informational roles almost equally, and both more than decisional roles. This did not concur with Mintzberg's (1973) and Alexander's (1979) suggestions that staff specialists use informational roles most in their work. Future research with a further sample may be able to clarify whether the almost equal use of interpersonal and informational roles which was found in this study is common in the personnel occupation generally.

The findings about political behaviour in Chapters Seven and Eight showed that our sample were politically aware contributors to decision-making. Further, the advisory role did not appear to be an appropriate description for the ways in which the interviewees used their knowledge and credibility to secure decisions/outcomes which satisfied them. While political activity has been mentioned by various personnel writers, (cf. Watson, 1986; Guest and Kenny, 1983), this study has provided evidence about the levels of political awareness among personnel practitioners, and about the types of political behaviour they say that they use in their dealings with other managers.

However, while the majority of the interviewees felt that they exerted influence rather than power, we might reasonably doubt whether their perceptions of their own behaviour were always entirely realistic. The means which they used to 'get their way' bear more than a passing resemblance to French and Raven's

(1960) five bases of power; expert power (knowledge/expertise/credibility) was mentioned most.

Questions were asked which related to the idea that the roles of personnel specialists are often ambiguous. The responses were unequivocal, and sometimes strongly expressed. Briefly: personnel was seen as management/on the management 'side', and not 'in between'; contributing to the achievement of organizational goals might sometimes mean sacrificing individuals for 'the greater good'; and union members' ideological sympathies did not take precedence over their managerial role. Thus, the 'in between' role was strongly rejected; the predominant role was managerial, possibly even managerialist.

In the report of the findings about stress which was generated by excessive workloads and time pressures, it was suggested that further research was necessary to find out if the 'in-between' role contributed to these causes of stress.

Our sample was 'professional' in the sense of wanting to do their jobs well, and of having a variety of 'relevant' and other qualifications, and they used their knowledge and expertise to gain credibility with other managers. The question remains of how much personnel-specific/'professional' knowledge our practitioners used in their interchanges with others, and how much was organization/industry/sector-specific, or other knowledge of the types shown in our model of knowledge use (Chapter Ten).

This question has its roots in a much broader one: how much and what kinds of personnel-specific 'theory' do specialists need and use in their jobs? The diversity of personnel work in practice may preclude obtaining a firm answer to this. However, if we combine our understanding of the concept of a 'knowledge bank' (Chapter Ten) with the findings in Chapter Nine about the ways in which specialists (especially late entrants) learned, it becomes possible to accept the idea that some practitioners may know a lot about some kinds of theory, while others function with comparatively little. Thus, it does not seem that the term professional, narrowly-defined as the institutionalised application of a codified body of knowledge, is an appropriate description for personnel specialists.

The final section of Chapter Ten discussed training for personnel work. It was suggested that, when placed in the wider context of education and training for management-level work in Britain, the experiences of our sample were symptomatic of a long-standing national weakness in provision. Further, the report queried the usefulness of thinking about education and training for management-level jobs as something which should only happen after job-holders have left full-time education.

These conclusions have provided a brief retrospective view of the findings in the study which have implications for future research. The report has presented data which the researcher has obtained, coded, analysed, and interpreted in certain ways. The methodology has been explained and presented for examination

in Chapter Four and in Appendix I.

She acknowledges, however, that others might have conducted these processes in different ways, and recognises that questions may arise about subjectivity and bias.

In this study, these matters were addressed in three ways. First, conscious that questions could contain biasing elements, the researcher 'piloted' the questionnaire and interviews, twice. Second, the research report notes instances where the interviewees may have had difficulty in analysing their own experiences and/or perhaps were rationalising their perceptions of these to present a certain image of themselves to the interviewer (Chapters Eight and Ten). Third, the writer acknowledges that the coding and/or other research processes inevitably carry a subjective element, which perhaps in turn may have affected the analysis of the data in unknowable ways.

We might possibly reflect, however, on whether it is possible to conduct research processes in ways which are entirely objective and bias-free. According to Elias (1971: 165);

"...even a scientific statement which appears to be 'objective' or 'true' is also 'subjective', namely a statement about objects as they appear to a subject".

Further, Silverman and Jones (1976: 23-4) felt that there was "no neutral ground from which to observe phenomena 'as they really are', or to judge the 'bias' of particular accounts", and they argued that bias was "the only way in which reality may be apprehended. Without 'bias' there are no phenomena to be

discussed".

It may not therefore, be possible for researchers to eradicate bias and/or subjectivity from their work entirely, despite the most earnest attempts to do so. With this thought in mind, the writer offers what she believes is one useful step to understanding 'the reality' of personnel management in Scotland.

APPENDIX 1METHODOLOGYThe questionnaire sample

It was intended that data would be obtained from as many personnel specialists as resources would allow, and that the sample would be representative of the population of personnel specialists in Scotland, as far as was reasonably practical. These aims presented some difficulties concerning sampling. First, there is no published information about which organizations in Scotland employ personnel specialists. Second, many organizations do not employ them, per se (cf. Thomason, 1981; Daniel and Millward, 1983).

The sample of 517 organizations was obtained from several different sources. The intention was to produce a list of organizations which would cover 27 activity classifications (see Appendix 2 frontpiece), and which were likely to have specialist personnel staff because they employed 200 or more people (cf. Daniel and Millward, 1983). It was hoped that the majority of such organizations could be found in Regional Councils' registers of local employers, and in the list of manufacturing companies provided by the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

However, the registers of employers tended to concentrate on private sector companies, mostly in manufacturing/engineering, which employed fewer than 200 people. Some registers included companies which had closed, and all of the registers did not

include all of the companies in their areas. A basic set of organizations was obtained from the registers.

It was found from the Scottish Council for Development and Industry printout of 3,900 manufacturing companies in Scotland that the majority of those employed fewer than 200 people. Selection of those organizations with 200 or more employees added 260 employers to the list.

Public sector organizations included: gas, electricity supply, forestry, atomic energy, coal, telecommunications, lighthouses, civil aviation, airports, ports, prisons, railways, tourist boards, the Scottish Development Agency, and the Common Services Agency of the NHS in Scotland. Contacts in local government provided lists of regional councils, district councils, regional development agencies, and health boards.

The final source of organizations which had not been secured by other means was newspaper recruitment advertisements which requested applicants to reply to a personnel officer/manager or other personnel job title. This perceived advantage of knowing that specialist personnel staff existed in some organizations proved an illusory one in part. Ten companies had asked applicants to reply to personnel staff who did not exist. Enquiries revealed that these companies always did this in their recruitment advertisements, so that they would have greater credibility in the eyes of applicants. For example, the 'Personnel Officer' in a large car dealership was the Sales Manager's secretary.

Recruitment advertisements produced contacts in banking, catering, construction, computer services, finance, hotels, insurance, law, micro-electronics, newspapers, oil exploration, oil-related services, publishing, retailing, stockbroking, and wholesaling.

While the aim of the study was to contact as many personnel specialists as possible, the IPM branch network was not used as a source of contacts, as it was felt that the sample might be biased unnecessarily by doing so. Possibly IPM members might be different in some ways from other personnel specialists.

Although specialist personnel staff are unlikely to be found in organizations which employ fewer than 200 people, the sample included a hundred private companies which were known to employ between 100 and 200, in the hope that some specialists would be contacted.

Thus, the final sample for the mailshot (517) included as wide a range as possible, in terms of employment sector and numbers employed. The questionnaire was piloted with an additional ten organizations which had sandwich course students at Dundee Institute of Technology. Thus, the total of employers contacted was 527.

The composition of the sample allowed for two additional factors: level of seniority within the personnel function, and specialism within the occupation. Organizations which were known to employ 1,000 people or more were therefore surveyed

with four questionnaires, addressed variously to the personnel manager or to the personnel director where one was known to exist, the recruitment specialist, the training specialist, and the industrial relations specialist. This procedure added 323 potential respondents to the mailing list. Thus, 840 questionnaires were mailed on 3rd January 1985. As 33 questionnaires had already been received from the ten pilot organizations, the questionnaire sample total was 873.

Response rates

Non-response to the first mailshot was followed up by letter at the end of January 1985, and the last questionnaires were received by mid-February. 161 replies were received which indicated reasons for non-completion of a questionnaire. These are detailed in Appendix 2, Table B. Briefly, 10% (53) were direct refusals, and 108 were ineligible because there was no specialist employed, or the company had closed, or had been duplicated. There were therefore 409 eligible organizations.

Response rate by organizations

The organization response rate was 42% (174):

<u>Organization sample</u>	<u>Number contacted</u>	<u>Number responded</u>	<u>Number of questionnaires received</u>
Eligible organizations	409	164	196
Pilot organizations	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>33</u>
Totals	<u>419</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>229</u>

Multiple responses were received from 25 of the eligible organizations, and these are detailed in Appendix 2, Table C.

Response rate by questionnaires issued

The 108 ineligible organizations reduced the questionnaire sample from 873 to 765. The response rate by questionnaires issued was 30%:

<u>Potential respondents</u>	<u>Number contacted</u>	<u>Number of questionnaires received</u>
Eligible	732	196
Pilot	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>
Totals	<u>765</u>	<u>229</u>

A full analysis of response to the study according to the 27 activity classifications is shown in Appendix 2, Table A.

Interview sample

The questionnaire had asked respondents to note whether they would be willing to be interviewed, and 134 (58%) affirmative responses were received. When the project was planned, the target number of interviews was 100. It was felt, however, that interviews only with questionnaire respondents might bias the results in some way. Thus, the interview sample was designed to include both respondents and non-respondents.

The aim in the interview sample was to cover all of the 27 activity classifications, thus including sectors for which no questionnaires had been received. Requests for interviews were made by telephone. As non-respondents had not shown interest in the study, despite a polite follow-up, it was anticipated that there might be some difficulty in obtaining interviews with them. Somewhat surprisingly, 95% (41) of the non-respondents who were contacted agreed to be interviewed, and the two

refusals expressed interest in the study, but did not have the time to participate. The interview sample was 109, made up of 62% (69) respondents, and 38% (41) non-respondents, and 24 of the activity classifications were covered (see Appendix 2, Table D. The interview sample was inevitably biased in respect of geographical factors. While respondents in Dounreay and Dumfries had agreed to be interviewed, it was not feasible in terms of both cost and travelling-time to include these locations. Thus, the area covered by the interviews was Aberdeen to Glasgow to Ayr to Edinburgh to Aberdeen. Travel was by train and/or bus.

A tape-recorder containing an integral microphone was used in all of the interviews. None of the interviewees objected to the use of a recording device, or seemed to be inhibited by its presence. In two interviews, recording was suspended temporarily at the interviewees' requests, while they expressed derogatory views about the competence of their senior managers.

The use of recordings proved useful, because many interviewees gave lengthy replies to questions, which proved difficult to note during the interview. The subsequent transcription of the tapes provided a 'richness' which the interview notes alone did not afford.

It is worth describing the nature of the interest shown by the interviewees in the questions about managerial work and knowledge use which were asked in both the questionnaire and the interviews. One expressed the view that a study of this

type was "long overdue", while others remarked:

"It's about time someone asked these questions. They cover the real issues involved in personnel management";

"My job doesn't bear any relation to the stuff I read about. I can relate to this, because it asks what I really do. For that reason, the questions caught my interest".

Some interviewees said that they wanted to be involved in the study because they recognised that it examined the practical skills involved in personnel management as managerial work, and they hoped that their contribution would help in the future training of personnel specialists. In every instance where a statement of this sort was made (N=15), it was followed by a criticism of the qualification courses sanctioned by the IPM.

The writer's background in personnel management and industrial relations proved to be an asset during the interviews, particularly in establishing rapport, and facilitating their pace. It was felt, however, that bias would be introduced if the interviewees knew about the writer's experiential background. Thus, she presented herself as a 'research student', and the interviewees were not given any other information about her until the interviews were finished, and then only if the interviewees enquired.

The choice of questionnaires and interviews as methods of obtaining data

The decision to obtain mainly quantitative data by questionnaire was relatively straightforward. The decisions about the means of collecting the more qualitative elements were less clear-cut.

While interviews were the most obvious means of obtaining qualitative data, there was some question about whether they would provide enough information about the sample's activities. Case studies were considered in this connection, but they were rejected on two grounds. First, the maximum period which could be allocated to them was six months, and it was felt that only six could be conducted in that time. Second, it was felt that a representative sample could not be provided with only six case studies. These factors tipped the balance of preference towards interviews as the means of obtaining qualitative data.

Mintzberg (1970) criticised 'indirect' methods of research such as questionnaires and interviews because "managerial work is simply too complex and we know too little about it". The managerial work section of this study, however, was only a part of the whole. Thus, questionnaires and interviews seemed to be the most appropriate means of securing all of the data which were sought. Much of the data concerned the sample's perceptions of their jobs, their political behaviour, and other aspects of their working lives. Mintzberg (1973) expressed approval about the use of questionnaires and interviews "in the study of managers' perceptions of their own jobs", and Bacharach and Lawler (1980) supported their use as research methods for examining organizations as political systems.

Sources of questions

The questions were chosen to cover the main areas of interest. The biographical and social and educational background questions

were drawn from a questionnaire used in the Steel Industry Management Association study (Bamber and Glover, 1975). Those about the respondents' organizations and establishments were designed to secure basic information about the main activity, the numbers employed, the numbers of personnel specialists employed, and other information which would contextualise the respondents' jobs.

The questions about occupational entry were derived from Watson's (1977) typology of entry. The questions about occupational choice, role ambiguity, external meetings, the relevance of the social or behavioural sciences to personnel work, power and influence, modifying decisions, relationships with other managers, and the means personnel specialists use to 'get their way' with others were drawn from Watson's interview schedule (1977, Appendix 2: 210-212). These were used so that comparisons could be made between the two studies. The questions about political behaviour built on the idea that the means people use to 'get their way' are primarily political ones.

The sections of the questionnaire which are to do with the 'managerial work' elements of the respondents' jobs were derived from ideas presented by various empirical researchers, especially Mintzberg (1973) and Kotter (1977, 1982a).

The activity/task list in Appendix 3, pages 17-21 was developed in collaboration with Mr. G. Martin, Lecturer in the Department of Business Studies, Dundee Institute of Technology. The tasks

which were included were derived from a wide range of writings about personnel management, some of which are detailed in Chapter Five, together with the reasons for their inclusion.

The questions about non-personnel duties drew on ideas presented by McFarland (1962), while those about the most important aspects of personnel work were chosen for comparison with Timperley and Osbaldeston (1975).

Writings about the effectiveness of personnel management (cf. Legge and Exley, 1975; Guest and Horwood, 1980; Fowler, 1983), and about the problems of measuring effectiveness (cf. Bennett and Langford, 1983; Burgoyne, 1983) prompted the inclusion of questions about these matters in the senior executive interviews.

The questions about knowledge and training were intended to discover the what, when and how of these matters, and were not derived from other sources. Similarly, some of the questions were not derived from any source other than the need to know fairly basic information about the sample in respect, for example, of their job titles, their main responsibilities, length of service in their jobs/the personnel occupation, and so on.

TABLE A - KEY TO ACTIVITY CLASSIFICATIONS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1	Agriculture, forestry and fishing
2	Coal, oil and natural gas extraction and processing
3	Electricity, gas, other energy and water supply
4	Metal manufacturing, ore and other mineral extraction
5	Chemicals and man-made fibres
6	Mechanical engineering
7	Office machinery, electrical engineering and instruments
8	Motor vehicles and parts
9	Other transport equipment
10	Metal goods not elsewhere specified
11	Food, drink and tobacco
12	Textiles, leather, footwear and clothing
13	Timber, wooden furniture, rubber, plastics
14	Paper products, printing and publishing
15	Construction
16	Wholesale distribution and repairs
17	Retail distribution
18	Hotels and catering
19	Transport
20	Postal services and telecommunications
21	Banking, finance and insurance
22	Public administration
23	Education
24	Medical and other health services
25	Other services
26	Amalgamations: Manufacturing
27	Amalgamations: Services

APPENDIX 2Table A

Composition of respondent sample - analysis of mailshot response and final sample by activity classification

<u>Activity</u> <u>Classif-</u> <u>ication</u>	<u>Organiz-</u> <u>ations</u> <u>mailed</u> N	<u>MAILSHOT</u>			<u>FINAL * SAMPLE</u>	
		<u>Question-</u> <u>naires</u> <u>mailed</u> N	<u>Question-</u> <u>naires</u> <u>received</u> N	<u>Response</u> <u>% by</u> <u>question-</u> <u>naires</u> <u>mailed</u>	<u>Frequ-</u> <u>ency</u> N **	<u>%</u>
1	3	5	0	0	0	0
2	14	28	7	25	15	7
3	4	12	3	25	3	1
4	16	29	6	21	7	3
5	20	30	7	23	5	2
6	49	89	19	21	20	9
7	42	83	26	31	26	11
8	7	14	4	29	4	2
9	2	5	2	40	2	1
10	30	59	3	5	1	0
11	69	119	30	25	32	14
12	60	73	12	16	12	5
13	19	35	1	3	3	1
14	36	49	14	29	14	6
15	20	28	6	21	6	3
16	3	4	3	75	2	1
17	15	17	6	35	8	3
18	5	5	1	20	1	0
19	12	22	8	36	8	3
20	1	7	3	43	3	1
21	18	34	6	18	11	5
22	16	21	11	52	20	9
23	7	7	4	57	5	2
24	9	12	3	25	7	3
25	23	25	2	8	2	1
26	14	25	7	28	10	10
27	3	3	2	67	2	2
Totals	<u>517</u>	<u>840</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

* includes 33 pilot returns

** the final sample frequencies show the activities which the respondents reported for their establishments (see Appendix 3, p.7, question B1). The main activity of some establishments varied from the activity classification which had been allocated to the employing organization.

APPENDIX 2Table BReasons for non-completion of returned questionnaires

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Questionnaires returned not completed</u>
No specialist employed	82
Do not wish to participate	53
Company no longer in business	19
Duplicated companies	<u>7</u>
Total	<u>161</u>

Table CNumbers of questionnaires received from mailed organizations

<u>Questionnaires completed</u>	<u>Organizations N</u>	<u>Total question- naires received</u>
N		N
1	139	139
2	19	38
3	5	15
4	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	<u>164</u>	<u>196</u>

APPENDIX 2Table DComposition of interview sample by activity classification,
respondents and non-respondents

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Respond-</u> <u>ents</u>	<u>Non-</u> <u>respond-</u> <u>ents</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0	2	2
Coal, oil, natural gas extraction and processing	9	5	14
Electricity, gas, other energy, water	2	0	2
Metal manufacturing, mineral extraction	3	2	5
Chemicals and man-made fibres	2	2	4
Mechanical engineering	5	2	7
Office machinery, electrical engineer- ing and instruments	4	1	5
Motor vehicles and parts	2	1	3
Other transport equipment	0	0	0
Metal goods not elsewhere specified	1	2	3
Food, drink and tobacco	6	2	8
Textiles, leather, footwear, clothing	3	1	4
Timber, wooden furniture, rubber, Paper products, printing, publishing	-	1 plastics	
Construction	2	2	4
Construction	1	2	3
Wholesale distribution and repairs	0	0	0
Retail distribution	4	1	5
Hotels and catering	0	2	2
Transport	4	2	6
Postal services and telecommunications	2	2	4
Banking, finance and insurance	3	3	6
Public administration	5	2	7
Education	4	0	4
Medical and other health services	2	1	3
Other services	1	2	3
Amalgamations: Manufacturing	3	1	4
Amalgamations: Services	0	0	0
Totals	<u>68</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>109</u>

APPENDIX 2Table EJob titles of respondents (N=229) and related frequencies

<u>a) Directors' titles</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Director Manpower Services	2
Director Personnel and Administration	1
Personnel Director	4
Personnel and Industrial Relations Director	<u>1</u>
	<u>8</u>
<u>b) Managers' titles</u>	
Area Personnel Manager	2
Assistant Personnel Manager	2
Assistant Staff Manager	2
Company Personnel Manager	2
Deputy Personnel Manager	2
Divisional Personnel Manager	2
Employee Relations Manager	3
Employee Resourcing Manager	1
Factory Personnel Manager	2
Group Development and Training Manager	1
Group Personnel Manager	5
Group Personnel and Training Manager	1
Industrial Relations Manager	3
Manager Personnel and Compensation	1
Manpower Resourcing Manager	1
Personnel Manager	54
Personnel and Administration Manager	3
Personnel and External Relations Manager	1
Personnel and Industrial Relations Manager	1
Personnel and Office Manager	2
Personnel and Training Manager	7
Personnel and Site Services Manager	1
Personnel Services Manager	2
Planning and Personnel Manager	1
Recruitment Manager	2
Regional Personnel Manager	1
Senior Personnel Manager	1
Site Personnel Manager	1
Staff Manager	4
Training Manager	3
Training and Development Manager	1
Training and Manpower Resources Manager	1
Training and Productivity Services Manager	<u>1</u>
	<u>117</u>

(continued overleaf)

APPENDIX 2Table E (continued)

<u>c) Officers' titles</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Administrative Officer (Personnel)	1
Assistant Personnel Officer	1
District Personnel Officer	1
Education and Training Officer	1
Employee Relations Officer	1
Executive Officer	1
Group Personnel Officer	1
Industrial Staff Officer (Process)	1
Personnel Administration Officer	1
Personnel Officer	63
Personnel Officer (Staff)	1
Personnel and Safety Officer	1
Personnel and Senior Industrial Relations Officer	1
Personnel and Training Officer	2
Recruitment Officer	1
Remuneration and Benefits Officer	1
Safety and Employment Officer	1
Sales Training and Personnel Officer	1
Senior Assistant Secretary and Personnel Officer	1
Senior Personnel Officer	4
Senior Staffing Officer	1
Staff Officer	1
Training Officer	3
Training Officer (Mills and Engineering)	<u>1</u>
	<u>92</u>
<u>d) Other job titles</u>	
Deputy Controller, Personnel	1
Employee Relations Adviser	1
Personnel Administrator	1
Personnel Administrator (Recruitment)	1
Personnel Adviser	1
Personnel Controller	2
Personnel Coordinator	1
UK Group Staff Adviser	1
Safety and Training Adviser	1
Staff Executive	1
Staff Personnel and Training Administrator	<u>1</u>
	<u>12</u>

APPENDIX 2Table FJob level by service in personnel

<u>Level</u>	*	<u>Service in years</u>							<u>Row Totals</u>	
		<u>Under one</u>	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-9</u>	<u>10-14</u>	<u>15-19</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>		<u>30+</u>
Director	F	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	2	8
	R	0	0	0	25	37	13	0	25	4
	C	0	0	0	3	8	5	0	29	
Manager	F	2	12	35	33	23	16	4	4	129
	R	1	9	27	25	18	14	3	3	56
	C	100	35	53	58	60	76	100	57	
Officer	F	0	22	31	22	12	4	0	1	92
	R	0	24	34	24	13	4	0	1	40
	C	0	65	47	39	32	19	0	14	
Column		2	34	66	57	38	21	4	7	229
Total	%	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>100</u>

* Key: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent

APPENDIX 2Table GCurrent age by age entered personnel

<u>Current age</u>	*	<u>Age entered personnel</u>								<u>Row Total</u>
		<u>Under 20</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>25-29</u>	<u>30-34</u>	<u>35-39</u>	<u>40-44</u>	<u>45-49</u>	<u>50+</u>	
23-29	F	3	32	5	0	0	0	0	0	40
	R	8	80	12	0	0	0	0	0	18
	C	17	39	12	0	0	0	0	0	
30-39	F	11	40	20	11	1	0	0	0	83
	R	13	48	24	13	1	0	0	0	37
	C	61	49	49	34	5	0	0	0	
40-49	F	1	9	7	13	14	7	0	0	51
	R	2	18	14	25	27	14	0	0	22
	C	6	11	17	41	58	37	0	0	
50-59	F	3	1	8	5	8	11	8	3	47
	R	6	2	17	11	17	23	17	6	21
	C	17	1	20	16	33	58	100	100	
60/over	F	0	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	6
	R	0	0	17	50	17	17	0	0	2
	C	0	0	2	9	4	5	0	0	
Column		18	82	41	32	24	19	8	3	227
Total		8	36	18	14	11	8	4	1	100

* Key: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent **

** Percentages have been rounded, and may not always total 100%

APPENDIX 2Table HAge by mode of entry

<u>Age</u>	*	<u>Initial chooser</u>	<u>A way out</u>	<u>Advance- ment</u>	<u>Boss Asked</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Row Total</u>
23-29	F	24	2	6	2	6	40
	R	60	5	15	5	15	18
	C	34	29	12	4	13	
30-39	F	38	1	11	16	17	83
	R	46	1	13	19	21	36
	C	53	14	22	29	37	
40-49	F	5	3	21	14	8	51
	R	10	6	41	27	16	22
	C	7	43	43	25	17	
50-59	F	4	1	9	20	14	48
	R	8	2	19	42	29	21
	C	6	14	18	36	30	
60 and over	F	0	0	2	4	1	7
	R	0	0	29	57	14	3
	C	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	
Column Total		<u>71</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>229</u>
Total		<u>31</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>

* Key: F = frequency; R = row percent; C = column percent **

** Percentages have been rounded, and may not always total 100%

APPENDIX 2Table IRespondents' job titles immediately prior to entering personnel

<u>Type of employment and title</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Administration (non-clerical):</u>	
Administration Manager	1
Administration Assistant	2
Assistant Company Secretary (F)	1
Commercial Services Manager	1
Company Secretary	1
Factory Administration Manager	1
Hospital Secretary	3
Manager Scottish Aerodromes	1
Office Manager (F2)	2
Senior Executive Officer	1
Stores Administration Officer (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>15</u>
<u>Apprentices/trainees:</u>	
Commercial Apprentice	2
Graduate Trainee	1
Management Trainee	1
Retail Management Trainee (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>5</u>
<u>Clerical/secretarial/P.A.s:</u>	
Accounts Clerk	1
Chief Clerk	1
Factory Clerk	1
Higher Clerical Officer (F)	1
Higher Clerical Officer - Pay (F)	1
Insurance Clerk	1
Leaf Clerk [sic]	1
Personal Assistant to Chairman (F1)	2
Production Clerk	1
Secretary (F4)	4
Staff Records Clerk	1
Student Records Officer (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>16</u>
<u>Computing:</u>	
Computer Administration Assistant	1
Computer Operations Manager	<u>1</u>
	<u>2</u>
<u>Education:</u>	
Teacher (F3)	<u>5</u>

(continued overleaf)

APPENDIX 2Table I (continued)

<u>Type of employment and title</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Employment:</u>	
Employment Adviser [Department of Employment]	1
Placement Officer [Department of Employment]	1
Recruitment Consultant [clerical agency] (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>3</u>
<u>Engineers (excluding industrial and work study engineers):</u>	
Chief Engineer	1
Engineer	1
Engineering Manager	1
Maintenance Engineer	1
Production Engineer	1
Production Planning Engineer	<u>1</u>
	<u>6</u>
<u>Estates Management [local government]:</u>	
Estates Manager	1
Estates Supervisor (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>2</u>
<u>Finance/accounting:</u>	
Assistant Works Cashier	1
Chief Cashier/Credit Controller	1
Claims Clerk	1
Claims Supervisor	1
Construction Project Accountant	1
Finance Manager (F)	1
General Accounting [full title not given]	1
Payroll Coordinator	1
Works Accountant	<u>1</u>
	<u>9</u>
<u>Forces:</u>	
Administrator [Royal Navy]	1
Aircraft Artificer [Royal Navy]	1
Army Staff College Instructor	1
Commanding Officer, Naval Air Squadron	1
Flying Officer [R.A.F.]	1
P.T. Instructor/Administrator [R.A.F.] (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>6</u>

(continued overleaf)

APPENDIX 2Table I (continued)

<u>Type of employment and title</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Industrial engineering/Work Study/O. & M.,</u>	
<u>Management Services :</u>	
Industrial Engineer	1
Industrial Engineering Manager	2
O. & M. Officer	1
Senior Industrial Engineer	1
Senior Management Services Officer	3
Senior Work Study Engineer	2
Work Study Engineer (F1)	3
Work Study Manager	1
Work Study Section Leader	<u>1</u>
	<u>15</u>
<u>Marketing:</u>	
Marketing Research Assistant	1
Marketing Services Assistant (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>2</u>
<u>Medical:</u>	
First Aid Officer (F)	1
Occupational Nurse (F)	1
Senior Nursing Officer (F)	<u>1</u>
	<u>3</u>
<u>Production/factory/works:</u>	
Assistant Factory Manager	1
Assistant Works Manager	1
Factory Manager	1
Line Manager	1
Operations Supervisor	1
Plant Operations Supervisor	1
Production Controller	1
Production Control Manager	1
Production Manager	6
Production Planner	1
Quality Control Supervisor	<u>1</u>
	<u>16</u>
<u>Retailing/sales/distribution:</u>	
Distribution Manager	1
Regional Sales Manager	1
Retail Salesman	1
Retail Manager (F)	1
Sales Administration Manager	1
Sales Assistant (F)	1
Sales Representative	1
Technical Sales Representative	<u>1</u>
	<u>8</u>

APPENDIX 2Table I (continued)

<u>Type of employment and title</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Science/technology:</u>	
Chemical Research Assistant (F)	1
Chemical Research [full title not given]	1
Research Chemist	1
Research and Development Chemist	1
Technologist	1
Technical Assistant	<u>1</u>
	<u>6</u>
<u>Training:</u>	
Area Training Board Adviser (F)	2
Training Development Officer	1
Training Instructor	1
Training Manager	1
Training Officer	<u>1</u>
	<u>6</u>
<u>Miscellaneous:</u>	
Assistant Manager - Shipbuilding	1
Assistant Dock Superintendent	1
Consultant Industrial Psychologist	1
Hotels/catering [full title not given]	1
Immigration Officer (F)	1
Industrial Relations Analyst	1
Junior Aerodynamicist [sic]	1
Local Advisory Officer (LAMSAC)	1
Mature Student	1
Minister	1
Planning and Development Manager	1
Product Manager	1
Property Services Manager	1
Public Relations Assistant	1
Security Officer	1
Senior Management Consultant	1
Ships' Joiner/TU Convenor	1
Supervisor [full title not given]	1
Tradesman	1
Travel Manager	<u>1</u>
	<u>20</u>

APPENDIX 2Table J

Respondents' qualifications
(reported in order of question A.6, p.2, Appendix 3) *

<u>Description of qualification</u>	<u>Frequ-</u> <u>ency</u>	<u>%</u> <u>(N=229)</u>
None	2	1
Scottish Leaving Certificate - lower	50	22
Scottish Leaving Certificate - higher	46	20
Scottish Certificate of Education - ordinary	85	37
Scottish Certificate of Education - higher	84	37
Scottish University Preliminary Exam.- higher	6	3
Recognised trade apprenticeship completed	13	6
Certificate of Secondary Education	2	1
General Certificate of Education - O level	47	21
General Certificate of Education - A level	40	17
School Certificate	14	6
Higher School Certificate	7	3
Clerical/commercial qualifications	17	7
City and Guilds Certificate	17	7
Ordinary National Certificate or Diploma	22	10
Higher National Certificate or Diploma	28	12
Nursing qualifications	3	1
Teaching qualifications	7	3
University/Central Institution/Poly. Diploma	39	17
University/Central Institution/Poly. Degree	103	45
University/Central Institution/Poly. Higher degree	18	8
Professional qualification other than the IPM one	55	24
Institute of Personnel Management qualification	81	35
Other qualifications	26	11

* The respondents were asked "Tick all that apply".

APPENDIX 2TABLE KPersonnel activities performed in respondents' organizations
(frequency table)

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>DON'T</u> <u>KNOW</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
1. Prepare annual manpower costs and budgets	216	96	7	3	3	1	226
2. Produce promotion plans for managers/supervisors	183	81	35	16	8	3	226
3. Authorise/monitor filling of vacancies	224	100	1	0	0	0	225
4. Advertise vacancies in local/national media	223	99	3	1	0	0	226
5. Use recruitment agencies to recruit senior staff	159	70	62	28	5	2	226
6. Use selection tests (eg Kostick, aptitude etc)	136	60	87	39	3	1	226
7. Evaluate effectiveness of selection techniques	147	65	66	29	13	6	226
8. Use personnel specifications in selection	156	69	59	26	11	5	226
9. Produce annual statement personnel policy	156	69	63	28	6	3	225
10. Produce corporate plans	186	83	31	14	7	3	224
11. Maintain personnel records (computer)	170	78	44	20	3	2	217
12. Maintain personnel records (not computer)	199	93	15	7	0	0	214
13. Process payroll	221	98	5	2	0	0	226
14. Administer statutory sick pay regulations	225	100	1	0	0	0	226
15. Compile statistics:							
a. Absenteeism	214	96	10	4	0	0	224

TABLE K continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>DON'T</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>KNOW</u>	<u>F %</u>	
15. Compile statistics:							
b. Accidents	211	96	9	4	0	0	221
c. Disciplinary problems	188	84	31	14	4	2	223
d. Disputes	164	77	48	22	3	1	220
e. Grievances	175	79	43	19	4	2	222
f. Labour turnover	211	95	9	4	3	1	223
g. Productivity	166	77	40	19	9	4	215
h. Sickness	218	97	6	3	0	0	224
i. Training costs	209	94	11	5	3	1	223
16. Forecast demand for staff one year/more ahead	168	75	48	21	9	4	225
17. Forecast labour turnover and/or absenteeism one year/more ahead	139	62	75	34	10	4	224
18. Maintain training records	214	96	8	4	1	0	223
19. Maintain pension scheme records (computer)	173	79	37	17	8	4	218
20. Maintain pension scheme records (not computer)	141	70	52	26	9	4	202
21. Administer pension scheme	202	90	22	10	1	0	225
22. Write/provide company handbooks for employees	202	90	23	10	1	0	226
23. Issue circulars/memos to management about employee- related matters	222	99	3	1	0	0	225
24. Issue circulars/memos to employees about employee- related matters	220	98	4	2	1	0	225
25. Produce company magazine/ newsletter	164	73	60	27	1	0	225

TABLE K continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>DON'T</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>KNOW</u>	<u>F %</u>	
26.Do organization analysis as prelude to OD programme	110	49	100	44	16	7	226
27.Use OD techniques of transactional analysis	54	24	142	63	30	13	226
28.Hold briefing groups	173	76	47	21	6	3	226
29.Assess training needs to produce training programme	220	98	5	2	1	0	226
30.Design annual training programme	204	90	21	10	1	0	226
31.Present in-company training courses	218	96	8	4	0	0	226
32.Present induction training	220	98	5	2	0	0	225
33.Give approval for external training courses	225	100	1	0	0	0	226
34.Use interviews or tasks/skills analysis in job analysis	159	70	56	25	11	5	226
35.Produce job descriptions	213	95	12	5	1	0	226
36.Use job evaluation techniques	173	77	52	23	1	0	226
37.Use job re-design techniques	73	32	123	55	29	13	225
38.Use performance appraisal techniques	188	83	32	14	6	3	226
39.Design/implement payment systems (not nationally or industry-wide agreed)	173	77	41	18	10	5	224
40.Conduct periodic salary reviews	201	90	21	9	3	1	225
41.Use group-based incentive payment schemes	110	49	109	48	7	3	226

TABLE K continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>DON'T KNOW</u>		<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	
42. Use joint consultative committees	174	78	45	20	5	2	224
43. Negotiate with unions about pay/conditions	185	82	40	18	1	0	226
44. Engage in productivity bargaining	125	55	90	40	11	5	226
45. Consult with union/employee reps. about non-pay matters	202	90	21	9	3	1	226
46. Use Employers' Association for advice/guidance	134	59	76	34	16	7	226
47. Consult with union-appointed safety reps	194	86	29	13	3	1	226
48. Conduct annual safety audit	171	76	40	18	15	6	226
49. Organise safety committees	205	91	17	7	4	2	226
50. Conduct regular safety inspections	206	91	15	7	5	2	226
51. Use suggestion schemes	99	44	116	52	10	4	225
52. Conduct welfare counselling interviews	204	90	19	9	3	1	226
53. Visit sick employees	194	86	26	11	6	3	226
54. Provide canteen/other catering facilities	207	92	19	8	0	0	226
55. Develop schemes for employee participation	139	62	68	30	18	8	225

APPENDIX 2TABLE L

Respondents' involvement in activity/task when performed
in their organizations
(frequency table)

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Advis-</u> <u>ory</u>		<u>Exec-</u> <u>utive</u>		<u>Advis-</u> <u>ory +</u> <u>Exec.</u>			<u>Not</u> <u>my</u> <u>job</u>		
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>
1. Prepare annual manpower costs and budgets	89	58	31	20	33	22	153	63	29	216
2. Produce promotion plans for mgt/ supvs	82	61	24	18	28	21	134	51	28	185
3. Authorise/monitor filling vacancies	49	24	95	47	58	29	202	22	10	224
4. Advertise vacancies in local/national media	24	12	131	68	38	20	193	30	14	223
5. Use recruitment agencies to recruit senior staff	26	26	55	53	22	21	103	57	36	160
6. Use selection tests (eg Kostick)	27	29	52	57	13	14	92	44	32	136
7. Evaluate effectiveness of selection techniques	40	36	60	53	12	11	112	35	24	147
8. Use personnel specifications in selection	34	26	77	58	21	16	132	23	15	155
9. Produce annual statement personnel policy	45	45	47	47	8	8	100	57	36	157
10. Produce corporate plans	67	77	14	16	6	7	87	100	54	187
11. Maintain personnel records (computer)	38	32	70	58	12	10	120	49	29	169

TABLE L continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Advis-</u> <u>ory</u>		<u>Exec-</u> <u>utive</u>		<u>Advis-</u> <u>ory +</u> <u>Exec.</u>			<u>Not</u> <u>my</u> <u>job</u>		N
	F	%	F	%	F	%	N	F	%	
12.Maintain person- nel records (not computer)	41	25	102	61	24	14	167	31	16	198
13.Process payroll	47	61	25	33	5	6	77	144	65	221
14.Administer stat- utory sick pay regulations	70	45	65	42	20	13	155	70	31	225
15.Compile statist- ics:										
a. Absenteeism	53	35	83	55	15	10	151	63	29	214
b. Accidents	39	34	63	55	13	11	115	98	46	213
c. Discipline	39	26	73	49	36	24	148	41	22	189
d. Disputes	37	32	55	48	23	20	115	55	32	170
e. Grievances	44	33	66	49	25	18	135	41	23	176
f. Labour turnover	45	29	94	61	16	10	155	55	26	210
g. Productivity	34	60	9	33	4	7	57	111	66	168
h. Sickness	53	34	81	52	22	14	156	62	28	218
i. Training costs	40	29	83	60	15	11	138	71	34	209
16.Forecast demand for staff one year or more ahead	64	52	41	34	17	14	122	46	27	168
17.Forecast labour turnover/absentee- ism one year or more ahead	39	40	44	44	16	16	99	40	29	139
18.Maintain training records	37	24	97	63	19	12	153	61	29	214

TABLE L continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Advis-</u>		<u>Exec-</u>		<u>Advis-</u>				<u>Not</u>		
	<u>ory</u>		<u>utive</u>		<u>ory +</u>		N		<u>my</u>		
	F	%	F	%	F	%			F	%	N
19.Maintain pension scheme records (computer)	20	44	19	41	7	15	46	127	73	173	
20.Maintain pension scheme records (not computer)	23	51	17	38	5	11	45	96	68	141	
21.Administer pension scheme	27	36	35	47	13	17	75	127	63	202	
22.Write/provide company handbooks for employees	45	27	91	56	27	17	163	39	19	202	
23.Issue circulars/memos to management about employee-related matters	21	11	129	64	50	25	200	22	10	222	
24.Issue circulars/memos to employees about employee-related matters	21	11	128	66	44	23	193	27	12	220	
25.Produce company magazine/newsletter	25	46	22	40	8	14	55	110	67	165	
26.Do organization analysis as prelude to OD programme	26	43	29	47	6	10	61	49	45	110	
27.Use OD techniques of transactional analysis	10	50	8	40	2	10	20	34	63	54	
28.Hold briefing groups	55	39	50	36	36	25	141	33	19	174	
29.Assess training needs to produce training programme	53	32	69	41	45	27	167	53	24	220	
30.Design annual training programme	38	28	71	52	27	20	136	68	33	204	

TABLE L continued

APPENDIX 2

<u>Activity/task</u>	<u>Advis-</u>		<u>Exec-</u>		<u>Advis-</u>			<u>Not</u>		
	<u>ory</u>	<u>ory +</u>	<u>utive</u>	<u>Exec.</u>	<u>ory +</u>	<u>Exec.</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>my</u>	<u>job</u>	<u>N</u>
	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>
31.Present in-company training courses	44	27	73	45	44	27	161	57	26	218
32.Present induction training	54	31	86	49	35	20	175	45	21	220
33.Give approval for external training courses	68	43	60	37	32	20	160	65	29	225
34.Use interviews or tasks/ skills analysis in job analysis	34	32	56	52	17	16	107	51	32	158
35.Write job descriptions	67	39	63	37	42	24	172	41	19	213
36.Use job evaluation techniques	32	27	62	53	24	20	118	55	32	173
37.Use job re-design techniques	26	57	11	24	9	19	46	28	38	74
38.Use performance appraisal techniques	68	42	61	38	33	20	162	25	13	187
39.Design/implement payment systems (not national or industry-wide)	36	30	64	53	21	17	121	52	30	173
40.Conduct periodic salary reviews	45	32	70	50	26	18	141	60	30	201
41.Use group-based incentive payment schemes	29	59	12	25	8	16	49	60	55	109
42.Use joint consultative committees	42	34	52	43	28	23	122	53	30	175
43.Negotiate pay and conditions with unions	22	19	60	50	37	31	119	66	36	185

TABLE L continued

APPENDIX 2

Activity/task	Advis- ory		Exec- utive		Advis- ory + Exec.		N	Not my job		N
	F	%	F	%	F	%		F	%	
44.Engage in product- ivity bargaining	19	28	28	41	21	31	68	57	46	125
45.Consult with union/ employee reps. about non-pay matters	41	26	67	42	51	32	159	43	21	202
46.Use Employers' Association for advice/ guidance	18	21	50	58	18	21	86	49	36	135
47.Consult with union- appointed safety reps	49	43	44	39	21	18	114	79	41	193
48.Conduct annual safety audit	33	45	26	36	14	19	73	98	57	171
49.Organise safety committees	43	41	44	41	19	18	106	98	48	204
50.Conduct regular safety inspections	44	52	26	31	15	17	85	120	59	205
51.Use suggestion schemes	30	60	15	30	5	10	50	48	49	98
52.Conduct welfare counselling inter- views	45	28	76	47	40	25	161	42	21	202
53.Visit sick employees	34	30	52	46	28	24	114	79	41	193
54.Provide canteen/ other catering facilities	35	37	43	45	17	18	95	109	53	204
55.Develop schemes for employee particip- ation	43	50	27	31	16	19	86	52	38	138

APPENDIX 2Table M (1 - 6) - Duties rated most important
in descending order from 1 = most importantM (1) - Most important duty rated 1 (N = 215)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
IR negotiation/ consultation	47	22
Recruitment/selection	47	22
Interpersonal	28	13
Training/MD	18	8
Policy formulation	16	7
Personnel planning	13	6
Personnel administration	8	4
Administration	7	3
General management	6	3
Managing own staff	6	3
Salary administration	6	3
Health and Safety	5	2
Welfare	2	1
Personnel services	2	1
Budgets	2	1
Other	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>215</u>	<u>100</u>

M2 - Most important duty rated 2 (N = 215)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
IR negotiation/consultation	37	17
Interpersonal	35	16
Recruitment/selection	31	14
Training/MD	27	13
Personnel administration	14	7
Personnel planning	12	6
Salary administration	12	6
Policy formulation	9	4
Administration	9	4
Managing own staff	8	4
Research	5	2
Welfare	4	2
General management	3	1
Health and Safety	3	1
Pensions/benefits admin.	2	1
Statistics	2	1
Budgets	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>215</u>	<u>100</u>

Table M (1 - 6) continuedAPPENDIX 2M (3) - Most important duty rated 3 (N = 210)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	32	15
Training/MD	32	15
IR consultation/negotiation	24	11
Administration	21	10
Recruitment	20	10
Salary administration	19	9
Personnel administration	9	4
Personnel planning	9	4
Policy formulation	7	3
Health and Safety	7	3
Managing own staff	6	3
Payroll processing	3	1
Statistics	3	1
Welfare	3	1
Job evaluation	2	1
Pensions/benefits	2	1
Research	2	1
General management	2	1
Personnel services	2	1
Budgets	2	1
Other	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>210</u>	<u>98</u>

M(4) - Most important duty rated 4 (N = 198)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	33	17
Training/ MD	26	13
IR negotiation/consultation	24	12
Administration	20	10
Recruitment	19	10
Health and Safety	13	7
Welfare	9	5
Salary administration	8	4
Personnel administration	7	4
Personnel planning	6	3
Policy formulation	6	3
Pensions/benefits	4	2
Research	4	2
General management	4	2
Managing own staff	3	1
Personnel services	3	1
Budgets	3	1
Job evaluation	2	1
Statistics	2	1
Payroll processing	1	0
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	<u>198</u>	<u>99</u>

Table M (1 - 6) continuedAPPENDIX 2M (5) - Most important duty rated 5 (N = 174)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Training/MD	29	17
Interpersonal	27	16
Administration	18	10
IR negotiation/consultation	14	8
Recruitment/selection	13	7
Personnel administration	11	6
Policy formulation	8	5
Health and Safety	7	4
Salary administration	7	4
Welfare	7	4
Managing own staff	7	4
Personnel planning	6	3
Pensions/benefits	4	2
Research	4	2
Other	3	2
Payroll processing	2	1
General management	2	1
Budgets	2	1
Job evaluation	1	1
Statistics	1	1
Personnel services	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>174</u>	<u>100</u>

M (6) - Most important duty rated 6 (N = 146)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	29	20
Administration	19	13
Training/MD	17	12
IR negotiation/consultation	12	8
Health and Safety	7	5
Welfare	7	5
Other	7	5
Policy formulation	6	4
Pensions/benefits	5	3
Research	5	3
Salary administration	5	3
Statistics	5	3
Personnel administration	4	3
Personnel planning	3	2
Recruitment/selection	3	2
General management	3	2
Managing own staff	3	2
Personnel services	2	1
Job evaluation	2	1
Payroll processing	1	1
Budgets	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>146</u>	<u>99</u>

APPENDIX 2

Table N (1 - 6) - Duties rated most time-consuming (1 - 6)
in descending order from 1 = most time-consuming

N (1) - Most time-consuming duty rated 1 (N = 210)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	47	22
Recruitment/selection	34	16
IR negotiation/consultation	33	16
Administration	30	14
Training/MD	13	6
Salary administration	9	4
Personnel administration	6	3
Managing own staff	6	3
Policy formulation	5	2
Statistics	5	2
General management	5	2
Personnel planning	4	2
Welfare	3	1
Personnel services	3	1
Health and Safety	2	1
Research	2	1
Pensions/benefits	1	0
Budgets	1	0
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	<u>210</u>	<u>96</u>

N (2) - Most time-consuming duty rated 2 (N = 209)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	48	23
Administration	35	17
Recruitment/selection	23	11
IR negotiation/consultation	22	11
Training/MD	19	9
Salary administration	9	4
Personnel administration	7	3
Other	7	3
General management	6	3
Personnel planning	6	3
Research	6	3
Policy formulation	3	1
Statistics	3	1
Managing own staff	3	1
Budgets	2	1
Welfare	2	1
Pensions/benefits	2	1
Job evaluation	2	1
Health and Safety	2	1
Payroll processing	1	0
Personnel services	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	<u>209</u>	<u>98</u>

APPENDIX 2N (3) - Most time-consuming duty rated 3 (N = 198)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	49	25
Administration	35	18
Recruitment	23	12
IR negotiation/consultation	21	11
Training/MD	21	11
Personnel planning	8	4
Policy formulation	5	3
Salary administration	5	3
Health and Safety	4	2
Statistics	4	2
Managing own staff	4	2
Budgets	4	2
Pensions/benefits	3	1
Personnel administration	3	1
Research	3	1
Welfare	2	1
General management	2	1
Job evaluation	1	0
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	<u>198</u>	<u>100</u>

N (4) - Most time-consuming duty rated 4 (N = 177)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	50	28
Administration	22	12
IR negotiation/consultation	22	12
Training/MD	20	11
Recruitment/selection	10	6
Health and Safety	7	4
Personnel administration	6	3
Research	6	3
Salary administration	5	3
Managing own staff	5	3
Welfare	4	2
Personnel planning	4	2
Payroll	3	2
Policy formulation	2	1
Statistics	2	1
General management	2	1
Personnel services	2	1
Job evaluation	1	1
Pension/benefits	1	1
General personnel work	1	1
Budgets	1	1
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>177</u>	<u>100</u>

Table N (1 - 6) continued

APPENDIX 2N (5) - Most time-consuming duty rated 5 (N = 147)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	38	26
Administration	22	15
Recruitment/selection	14	10
Training/MD	14	10
IR negotiation/consultation	7	5
Policy formulation	7	5
Salary administration	6	4
Health and Safety	5	3
Personnel planning	5	3
Pensions/benefits	4	2
Welfare	4	2
Other	4	2
Research	3	2
General personnel work	3	2
Job evaluation	2	1
Payroll processing	2	1
Statistics	2	1
General management	2	1
Personnel administration	1	1
Personnel services	1	1
Budgets	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>147</u>	<u>98</u>

N (6) - Most time-consuming duty ranked 6 (N = 127)

<u>Duty</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Interpersonal	39	31
Administration	19	15
Training/MD	9	7
Health and Safety	7	6
IR negotiation/consultation	7	6
Personnel planning	7	6
Personnel administration	6	5
Research	5	4
Managing own staff	5	4
Other	5	4
Salary administration	3	2
Welfare	3	2
Pension/benefits	2	1
Policy formulation	2	1
Recruitment/selection	2	1
Budgets	2	1
Job evaluation	1	1
Payroll processing	1	1
Statistics	1	1
Personnel services	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>127</u>	<u>100</u>

TABLE O (1 - 9)APPENDIX 2

Types of work according to the time spent on them
rated 1 = most time spent through 9 = least time spent
Frequency table

Table O (1) - Processing routine paperwork

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	26	12
2	40	18
3	22	10
4	32	14
5	25	11
6	34	15
7	23	10
8	20	9
9	1	0
Missing	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

Table O (2) - Telephone calls

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	14	6
2	33	15
3	48	21
4	45	20
5	38	17
6	21	9
7	14	6
8	9	4
9	2	1
Missing	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

Table O (3) - Observational tours/walking around

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	11	5
2	7	3
3	16	7
4	19	9
5	22	10
6	30	14
7	38	18
8	66	30
9	8	4
Missing	<u>12</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

APPENDIX 2Table O (1 - 9) continuedTable O (4) - Correspondence

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	30	13
2	31	14
3	40	18
4	37	16
5	32	14
6	26	12
7	21	9
8	7	3
9	1	0
Missing	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

Table O (5) - Formal meetings

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	59	26
2	35	16
3	32	14
4	22	10
5	34	15
6	16	7
7	13	6
8	11	5
9	2	1
Missing	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table O (6) - Formulating and writing up plans

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	29	12
2	39	18
3	24	11
4	31	14
5	20	9
6	29	13
7	27	12
8	20	9
9	1	0
Missing	<u>9</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

APPENDIX 2TABLE O (1 - 9) continuedTable O (7) - Informal meetings

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	48	21
2	44	20
3	33	15
4	25	11
5	20	9
6	28	13
7	19	8
8	6	3
9	0	0
Missing	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table O (8) - Casual encounter discussions

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	1	0
2	11	5
3	12	6
4	15	7
5	30	14
6	32	15
7	49	23
8	58	27
9	7	3
Missing	<u>14</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table O (9) - Other

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
1	8	17
2	2	4
3	3	6
4	0	0
5	1	2
6	1	2
7	5	11
8	7	15
9	20	43
Missing	<u>182</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

APPENDIX 2

TABLE P (1 - 7)
Contact with other departments at work
rated 1 = most contact through 6 = least

Table P (1) - contact with Accounts/Finance

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	34	15
1	16	7
2	37	16
3	60	26
4	54	24
5	24	10
6	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table P (2) - Contact with Operational departments

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	28	12
1	115	50
2	39	17
3	23	10
4	11	5
5	10	4
6	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table P (3) - contact with Planning/General Management

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	35	15
1	47	21
2	62	27
3	35	15
4	29	13
5	13	6
6	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

TABLE P (1 - 7) continuedAPPENDIX 2Table P (4) - contact with Sales/Marketing

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	87	38
1	10	4
2	10	4
3	10	4
4	30	13
5	46	20
6	<u>36</u>	<u>16</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table P (5) - contact with Work Study department

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	107	47
1	5	2
2	9	4
3	14	6
4	25	11
5	27	12
6	<u>42</u>	<u>18</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table P (6) - contact with Shop Stewards/employee reps

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	52	23
1	20	9
2	44	19
3	48	21
4	29	13
5	21	9
6	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table P (7) - Other internal contacts

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Missing	192	84
1	8	3
2	7	3
3	5	2
4	1	0
5	7	3
6	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

APPENDIX 2TABLE Q (1 - 6)

External contact rated 1 = most contact through 6 = least
frequency table

Table Q (1) - external contact rated 1

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Recruitment agency	53	23
Trades unions	45	20
Employers' Association	29	13
Government departments	16	7
Training boards	12	5
Other	12	5
Companies - same group	9	4
Health and Safety Executive	7	3
Companies- same sector/industry	6	3
Advertising agency	6	3
Job Centre	6	3
Companies - not same group/industry	5	2
Colleges	5	2
Schools	3	1
Universities	3	1
Recruitment consultants	1	0
Missing values	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table Q (2) - external contact rated 2

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Government departments	29	13
Trades unions	29	13
Training boards	22	10
Other	20	9
Employers' Association	18	8
Recruitment agency	13	6
Companies - not same group/industry	11	5
Colleges	10	4
Health and Safety Executive	10	4
Advertising agency	8	3
Companies - same sector/industry	7	3
Job centre	6	3
Schools	5	2
Universities	4	2
Companies - same group	3	1
Newspapers	2	1
Recruitment consultants	2	1
IPM	1	0
Missing values	<u>29</u>	<u>13</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>101</u>

Table Q (1 - 6) continuedAPPENDIX 2Table Q (3) - external contact rated 3

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Recruitment agency	22	10
Government departments	19	8
Trades unions	19	8
Training boards	19	8
Other	19	8
Health and Safety Executive	12	5
Employers' Association	11	5
Job centre	10	4
Companies - not same group/industry	8	3
Schools	7	3
Colleges	6	3
Companies - same sector/industry	6	3
Universities	5	2
Advertising agency	3	1
Newspapers	1	0
PER	1	0
Missing values	<u>61</u>	<u>26</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>97</u>

Table Q (4) - external contact rated 4

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Government departments	23	10
Other	22	10
Training boards	14	6
Trades unions	11	5
Companies - not same group/industry	8	3
Employers' Association	8	3
Health and Safety Executive	8	3
Colleges	8	3
Recruitment agency	7	3
Companies - same sector/industry	6	3
Job centre	5	2
Schools	4	2
Universities	4	2
Advertising agency	4	2
Newspapers	3	1
Missing values	<u>94</u>	<u>41</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

Table Q (1 - 6) continuedAPPENDIX 2Table Q (5) - external contact rated 5

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Government departments	18	8
Other	18	8
Trades unions	10	4
Recruitment agency	7	3
Health and Safety Executive	6	3
Colleges	5	2
Companies - not same group/industry	5	2
Employers' Association	4	2
Training board	4	2
Schools	4	2
Advertising agency	3	1
Companies - same sector/industry	2	1
Job centre	2	1
Universities	2	1
Companies - same group	1	0
Missing values	<u>138</u>	<u>60</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table Q (6) - external contact rated 6

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Government departments	13	6
Other	11	5
Health and Safety Executive	6	3
Trades unions	6	3
Colleges	4	2
Recruitment agency	4	2
Employers' Association	3	1
Companies - not same group/industry	2	1
Newspapers	1	0
Schools	1	0
Training board	1	0
Companies - same sector/industry	1	0
Missing values	<u>176</u>	<u>76</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

APPENDIX 2Table R (1 - 10)The extent to which Mintzberg's (1973) roles performed
in respondents jobs - frequency tableTable R (1) - Resource Allocator - decisional role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	9	4
Important	93	42
Neither important/inimportant	40	18
Unimportant	41	18
Insignificant/absent	39	18
Missing values	7	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (2) - Negotiator - decisional role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	64	29
Important	72	32
Neither important/unimportant	34	15
Unimportant	14	6
Insignificant/absent	40	18
Missing values	5	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (3) - Disturbance Handler - decisional role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	86	38
Important	107	48
Neither important/unimportant	18	8
Unimportant	11	5
Insignificant/absent	3	1
Missing values	4	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (4) - Entrepreneur - decisional role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	27	12
Important	99	44
Neither important/unimportant	47	21
Unimportant	25	11
Insignificant/absent	25	11
Missing values	6	-
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

TABLE R (1 - 10) continuedAPPENDIX 2Table R (5) - Leader - interpersonal role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	55	25
Important	117	52
Neither important/unimportant	29	13
Unimportant	7	3
Insignificant/absent	16	7
Missing values	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (6) - Liaison - interpersonal role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	48	21
Important	128	57
Neither important/unimportant	35	16
Unimportant	9	4
Insignificant/absent	5	2
Missing values	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (7) - Figurehead - interpersonal role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	23	10
Important	92	41
Neither important/unimportant	70	31
Unimportant	24	11
Insignificant/absent	14	6
Missing values	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

Table R (1 -10) continuedAPPENDIX 2Table R (8) - Monitor - informational role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	34	15
Important	113	51
Neither important/unimportant	56	25
Unimportant	14	6
Insignificant/absent	6	3
Missing values	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (9) - Disseminator - informational role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	56	25
Important	121	54
Neither important/unimportant	41	18
Unimportant	5	2
Insignificant/absent	2	1
Missing values	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>100</u>

Table R (10) - Spokesman - informational role

<u>Rated</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Valid %</u>
Main feature/very important	34	15
Important	104	46
Neither important/unimportant	39	17
Unimportant	24	11
Insignificant/absent	23	10
Missing values	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>
Totals	<u>229</u>	<u>99</u>

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