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**CAREER SUCCESS
OF DISABLED HIGH-FLYERS**

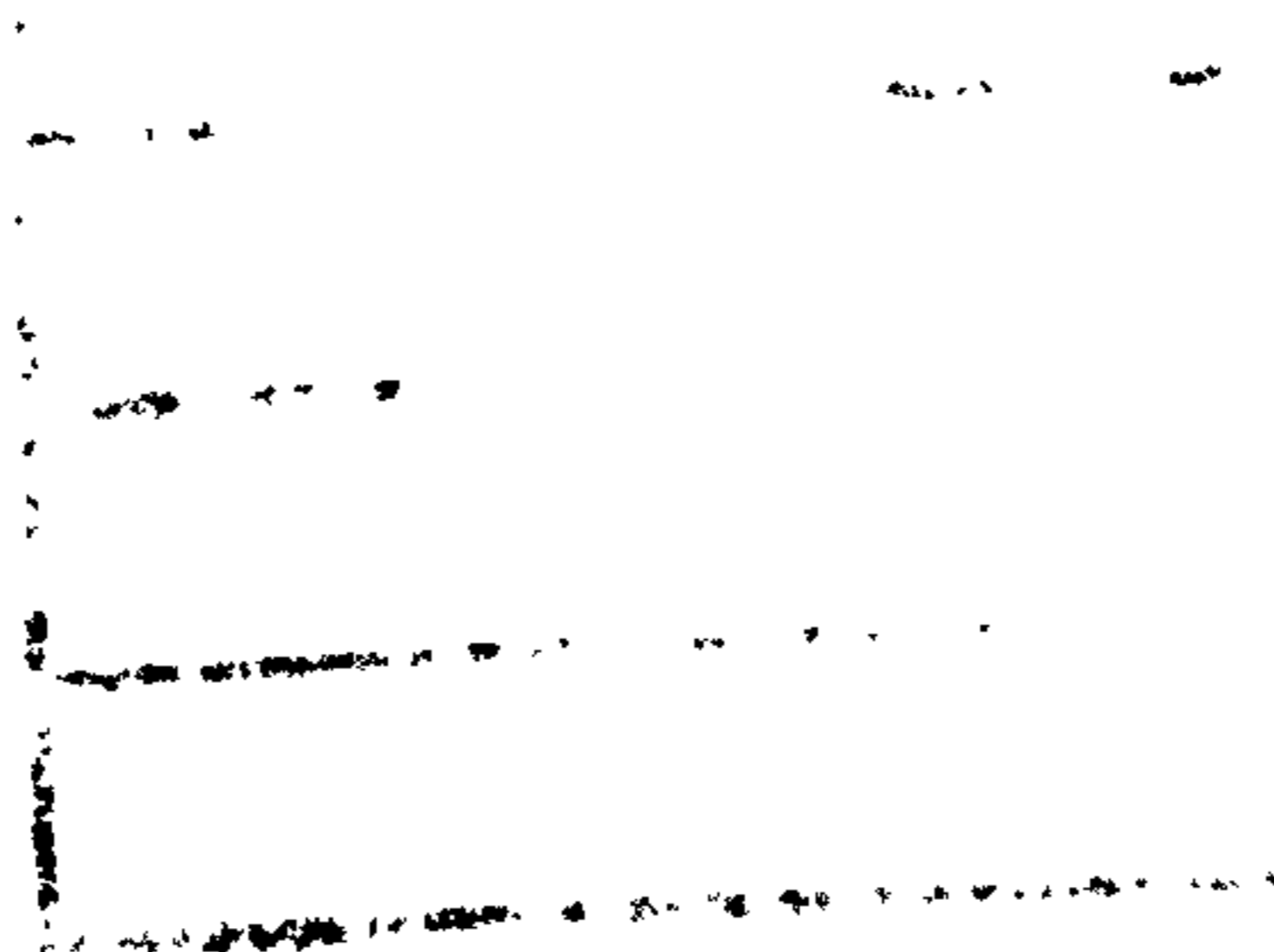
By

Sonali Laxmi Shah

**Doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of PhD of Loughborough University**

(2002)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this qualitative study is to identify what factors a group of professional disabled people perceived had influenced their career success, and how they define career success. The study is based on subjective accounts of thirty-one disabled high-flyers: men and women from different social and ethnic backgrounds, with congenital or acquired physical impairments, and hold occupational positions in Social Class I or II of the Registrar General's classification of occupations.

This work looks at the extent to which the disabled high-flyers perceived career choice and progression, childhood, education, disability, and personality to be significant to their career development and success, and how they define success.

Using the data collected from semi-structured interviews, this research provides an in-depth insight of the journey travelled, by each of the thirty-one disabled people, from childhood to achieving career success in adulthood.

The study shows that oldstyle careers, operating in stable and supportive organisations are sometimes more beneficial to disabled people than some forms of new careers known as 'boundaryless' and which require more flexibility and moving from place to place. It indicates the existence of the 'glass ceiling' in many sectors of the economic market, showing it to cause disabled people to redirect their original career choice. The study also shows that individuals with congenital disabilities were often likely to follow more of a boundaryless approach of career progression in order to meet their initial career aspirations. It also found that, disability was not only sometimes a causal attribute of re-directed career progression, but also, at times, a precursor of career choice and success. However being disabled was not always the cause of career change and re-direction. Several of the disabled people perceived their career to have developed much the same as that of their non-disabled colleagues.

This thesis recognises the role of education in the career and life success of the disabled high-flyers. The advantages and disadvantages of mainstream and segregated education are highlighted. Although segregated education does indeed restrict the educational and therefore, occupational choices of young disabled people, it is nonetheless considered to be essential to the social, physical and psychological development of disabled children. This work offers the idea of link schools and partial integration to facilitate disabled students to achieve life goals at the rate of their non-disabled peers.

The career orientation of the female disabled high-flyers, particularly those with childhood disability, was unlikely to be influenced by their gender. It seems that disability was the master status, overriding all other attributes, including gender. However this was not a negative thing. It was found that disabled women are not only capable of achieving a status equal to non-disabled women in the home, but also have the potential to compete with non-disabled men in the workplace and succeed in gender atypical careers.

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CHAPTER 1:

*“It is necessary to be skilled in failing to
stand up and move further”*

(Yuri Nikolaevitch Kazakov)

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This qualitative study is about the career development of 31 high-achievers with congenital and acquired physical impairments, and their journey to career success. It explores how they perceive their childhood, their education, their personality and their life experiences of living as a disabled people in a non-disabled society have influenced their career choice and progression. The thesis examines the differences between individuals with acquired and congenital disabilities in terms of how the onset of their impairment affected their life achievements and the route they had to take to achieve career success. Furthermore it discovers whether, and the extent to which, gender had an impact on the career choices and development of these disabled individuals (as it does for non-disabled individuals), or whether disability was more significant. Another interest of the thesis is to learn how the disabled high-flyers defined success, and how the definitions differ according to gender and onset of disability.

The thesis begins with chapter 1 that starts by briefly identifying the author and her personal motivations for conducting such a study. Section 1.2 of the chapter explores the benefits of workforce diversity to meet the needs of a multicultural society. It

describes how disabled people, in particular, can make a positive contribution to the developing economy. However it emphasises that disabled employees are not a homogeneous group, so initiatives produced to empower them in employment needs to operate on an individual basis. Therefore there is a need to find out about how disabled people's individual life experiences and personal perceptions of success influence their career progression and position in society. Section 1.3 describes the specific aims and objectives of the thesis. The chapter concludes with section 1.4 which provides a content summary of the following six chapters.

1.1 A personal perspective on researching what influences the career success of individuals with physical impairments

On a personal level, my decision to pursue a PhD in this particular subject matter was driven by the Asian achievement-oriented culture within which I was born and brought up, and the prejudice I experienced when growing up as a disabled person and striving to meet mainstream goals in education, employment and society as a whole. One such instance of overt discrimination was being rejected from a diploma course in journalism, a course that would qualify me to achieve my ambition and pursue a career in newspaper journalism. Despite being awarded a bursary to study the course, and passing the initial examination successfully, I was not given a place because it was thought that my disability would prevent me from achieving and coping with the work required. This was seen as a significant turning point in my future orientation. The fact that the decision to do a postgraduate degree was made after my experience of disability discrimination when striving to meet my aspired career goals meant that this was an obvious topic for me to investigate. As Marshall (1995) asserts, research can often be linked with the researcher's life process as they

pursue topics of personal relevance and hope to achieve life development as well as intellectual insight.

Although the direction of my research has altered somewhat since my initial proposal, the experiences of myself, of friends and of other people with disabilities living in a mainstream society continue to motivate me. The belief that every person has the right to personal freedom and to make personal choices, in accordance with their personal credentials, and not to be stereotyped in any way is one of the fundamental underlying principles of this research. Studying for this PhD has proved to be a crucial period of personal development for me, as it has not only taken me into new avenues of competence, and exposed me to great inspirations, but also taught me that there is truth in the famous proverb "*where there's a will there's a way*".

1.2 Diversity in the workplace

Over the past ten years organizations have tended to rethink the way in which they operate. Increasing globalisation and continuous moves towards a multicultural society has sharpened competition for organisations to become more organic and responsive to change (Legge, 1995). As a consequence of this, much interest has been placed on the contributions of the workforce. As has been argued by Kandola (1995), the multi-national success of organisations has stemmed from the diversity of their workforce. Similarly, Woodhams and Danieli (2000) argue that a diverse workforce is more representative of a diverse customer base and able to get closer to the customer, understand their needs and so increase the company's market share.

Furthermore, by appreciating the value of a more diverse public workplace in terms of race, gender, and disability, organisations become better equipped with specific skills and knowledge to compete in the labour market (Dickens 1994; Cassell, 1997). For example, Duckworth (1995) argues that disabled people living in a predominantly inaccessible world have to develop highly refined problem solving skills that can be seen as pertinent to today's employment.

Much has been done, in recent years, to improve the employment situation of disabled people and encourage their inclusion in the mainstream labour market. Legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) enshrines the legal tradition of treating all individuals equally. Although it has undoubtedly provided increasing employment opportunities for disabled people, while reducing discrimination in the workplace, it tends to depend on a measure of homogeneity within disabled groups of employees in order to produce effective remedies (Woodhams and Denieli, 2000). This presents problems for disabled people, who are a heterogeneous group with different needs according to the type and severity of their impairment. Thus no need for interventions or solution of disadvantage is universally applicable to all disabled workers.

However, other governmental initiatives such as "Access to Work" or PACT (Placement and Counselling Team) do tend to operate on a more individualised basis, working to empower disabled employees by providing financial assistance for reasonable accommodations to be made. In addition these initiatives have promoted the flexible employment opportunities that new technologies provide to disabled

people whose credentials were previously overlooked due to work being based on manual labour.

Nevertheless despite these policy innovations to promote an integrated and diverse workforce, other issues have to be addressed about how disabled people's individual life experiences and characteristics drive them to be successful in their careers, and the influence that constant attributes such as gender and onset of disability have on disabled people's life experiences. Therefore further attention needs to be given to their childhood background and socialisation which will usually have a significant influence on their career choice and occupational achievement (see White et al, 1992). Social class and parental occupation have been evidenced, over the years, to play a critical role in determining the career orientation of non-disabled people. Similarly parental expectations and childhood events have a lasting influence on how disabled children grow and develop, and the direction they take in adult life.

An individual's personality also has an important influence on their occupational choice, on whether they achieve success or failure in their job, and on whether they are likely to work hard to overcome obstacles to achievement or give up in the face of adversity. The personality of every individual is unique and determines whether they are inclined to be self-controlled or controlled by others, how strong their need for achievement is and the goals that they are likely to aspire to and meet. It is important to understand how individuals behave in certain circumstances and what motivates them to do so.

Education has been considered to be strongly linked to vocational participation (Giddens, 1997). Schools help to provide the technical and social skills required by industrial enterprise; and they instil respect for authority and discipline into the labour force. Schools and colleges help to motivate some individuals towards achievement and success, while discouraging others who find their way into low paid jobs. The level and subject of education has a general connection to the accessing of employment opportunities, especially since employers use academic credentials as a means of narrowing down the field of applicants. Furthermore the type of educational institution an individual attends influences their psychosocial, cognitive and academic experiences and development, which in turn can contribute to the direction of their economic future. This is particularly the case for disabled students who have attended segregated educational institutions with a limited choice of subjects and low expectations. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

Therefore, although governmental legislation has indeed provided disabled people with the opportunity to contribute to the economic development of society, it is their upbringing, life experiences and personal characteristics which encourage them to capitalise on such opportunities and use them to meet their own personal and professional goals.

However, although the correlation between disabled people's life experiences and their career development is a very important subject area, it has received very little attention to date. Therefore this research aims to contribute to remedying this dearth of knowledge by demonstrating how a group of disabled high-flyers perceived their life experiences, personal attributes, and significant others to have influenced their

life, career development and choices. The 'disabled high-flyer', in this study, defines physically disabled individuals who have achieved a recognised standard of power and prestige in their professional lives. These individuals have achieved and secured employment at levels far beyond what is considered to be the norm for the majority of disabled people in Britain.

Managing a diverse workforce entails organisations having a greater understanding of what their employees want from their career and what it means to them (Sturges, 1996). This is particularly the case for certain minority groups such as people with disabilities who, as this study will show, for various reasons, may hold different ideas about career success than those which are traditionally held. One explanation for this could be that disabled people are often restricted from climbing the career ladder due to the 'glass ceiling' (Barnes, Thornton, Campell, 1998, p. 33). True barrier removal for disabled people would cost organisations too much in terms of disruption, specialist advice, training and money (Woodhams and Danieli, 2000). Moreover, this examination of work procedures and activities is unlikely to be truly beneficial to all disabled employees.

However, the disappearance of "career by advancement" (Sturges, 1996) and the emergence of a "boundaryless" career, which moves across the boundaries of separate employers and is independent of conventional organisational career principles (Arthur, 1994; Mirvis and Hall, 1994), places greater value on individual perceptions of career success. It may offer organisations a better idea of what people actually want from their careers, and thus provide some indication of potential alternative

focuses for future career development initiatives. As argued by Gattiker and Larwood (1986):

“Any understanding of career paths and effective personnel management is substantially reduced if the subjective side of career success is ignored”.

(Gattiker & Larwood, p78-94)

1.3 Aim of research

The lack of autobiographical material on disabled high-achievers, in both academic and popular literature, has motivated the researcher to conduct such a study. Although disabled people have been the focus of much research on the subject of employment, they have tended to be either unemployed or occupying a low-paid low-status job (e.g Barnes, 1991; Hendey, 1999). Therefore the research sample to be used in this qualitative study is a very unique group of disabled people, most of whom worked in occupations classified as either Social Class I or II, in accordance with the Registrar General’s Scale of occupations by social class. Due to the fact that the majority of disabled employees do tend to work in the lower end of the service sector, it was not simple to target potential respondents who worked in Social Class I or II type occupations. Therefore because of the lack of time and resources to find a large enough sample of disabled employees in such occupations, one or two of the respondents selected for the study held occupations that could not be classified in terms of Social Class I or II. These respondents worked in specialist non-manual areas and also were considered, by others, to have exceeded societal expectations of disabled people. However, disabled people with clerical or routine manual jobs were not considered suitable to participate in this study. Furthermore these disabled people, (from different social and ethnic backgrounds) with congenital or acquired

impairments, were selected to participate in this study because they also perceived themselves as successful in terms of their career development and life achievements, compared to other disabled people and, in a few cases, non-disabled people.

An aim of this thesis is to tie together various areas of previous research about disabled people, which tended to focus only on single aspects of career development such as childhood, education, personality, employment, disability or discrimination. For example, educational opportunities for disabled people provided an important knowledge base for the influential work of Tomlinson (1982). The Tomlinson Committee (1982) stated, in their proposal for inclusive education, that: "learning could only be effective if it was inclusive". However, education was the principal focus of the study which failed to consider the influence of family environment and childhood experiences on educational achievement.

Therefore I intend to examine if and the extent to which the areas of career development, listed above, inter-relate. Further the research aims to discover why the respondents perceive each of the areas to be important to their career development.

The literature on career success has traditionally been largely based on non-disabled men (Super, 1957; Ginzberg, 1951), and, only recently, their female counterparts (White et al, 1992). Therefore it is the aim of this thesis to fill the gap in work, in the areas of careers and disability, by providing a knowledge of the disabled high-flyers' progressive journey to career success, including significant turning points, obstacles encountered and specific strategies adopted to combat them. Through semi-structured interviews, this research seeks to explore the extent to which the areas, considered by

previous literature (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; White et al, 1992), to be significant to the career success of a non-disabled high-flyer, (i.e. childhood, personality, education, and career choice and progression) contribute to the disabled person's career development and success. Furthermore it proposes to demonstrate the similarities and differences that occur as a consequence of gender and onset of disability.

Another aim of the study is to fill a clearly identified gap in academic literature on careers and on disability, by attempting to develop a conceptualisation of the disabled high-flyers' personal perception of career success which takes account of the possibility that disability may have an influence on the way success is conceived.

Gattiker and Larwood (1989) state:

“The examination of individual perceptions of achievement, which are important because they might reveal that individuals feel differently about their accomplishments than an outsider might expect, has unfortunately not been a popular subject so there is less research in this area.”

(Gattiker & Larwood, p75-92)

It is hoped that a further outcome of the research will be to provide role models for young career-minded people with disabilities who can use the findings and biographies in case study and workshop exercises in education and training. This would serve to significantly contribute to the educational process of equality and to make employers, support service workers and society in general aware of what disabled people can achieve and what factors may facilitate or hinder them doing so.

1.4 Summary of the thesis chapters

The thesis is subdivided into four parts: the literature review, methodology review, results and conclusion and discussion. It comprises of seven chapters, the content of which can be summarised below:

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 review the literature in the areas of disability, careers, childhood, education and personality to evaluate the current theories that surround career success and disability. Chapter 2 examines the historical literature concerning the role of disabled people in employment. It considers the definition of disability, both as a social and as a medical phenomenon. It reviews the evidence revealing the discrimination encountered by disabled people in employment, and demonstrates the implementation of tools and public policies contributing to its elimination. The issue of disabled women in employment has also been given attention. Issues such as the double-bind of disabled women in the workforce and the de-genderisation of disabled females in mainstream society are considered. A further consideration of this chapter is the Registrar General's classification of occupations by social class and explains that social class is a powerful determinant of occupational status for the disabled and non-disabled community alike. The chapter concludes by looking at the future position of disabled people in the 21st century workforce by identifying how and what can be done to empower them and contribute to their career success.

Chapter 3 examines the theoretical background to the subject of career success. It considers existing theory in the field of occupations, career development and career success, and demonstrates that a career is a two dimensional concept which connects the individual to the social structure of society. It explains that career success need not

be measured in terms of external criteria alone because individual perceptions of career success are important. It also explores the reasons why disabled people are likely to place a great importance on internal subjective measures of career success.

Chapter 4 is devoted to an exploration of four factors which have an impact on career success: childhood, education, personality and motivation, and career choice and career progression. Section 4.1 reviews the literature about childhood, disabled childhoods, parental expectations and social class. Section 4.2 concerns itself with education and the comparison between segregated and mainstream education. Section 4.3 discusses locus of control and need for achievement, and highlights the primary motivations of high-flyers including work centrality. Finally section 4.4 looks at the typical career routes and career choices of high-flyers.

Chapter 5 defends the choice of research methods used for this study. It considers the issues raised when the researcher and the research subjects share similar characteristics, and discusses how the ability to empathise with what is being researched facilitates the targeting of potential respondents for the sample and the acquisition of rich quality data. Moreover it recognises the importance of personal experience, narrative and biography in the learning process. The chapter describes how the research was conducted, and includes details of the research settings, the criteria used in the selection of respondents and problems encountered. It further discusses the approach adopted for the analysis of the qualitative data, including the method of coding.

Chapter 6 opens with a brief biography of each of the 31 respondents. It then shows the analysis of the 5 themes, pre-dictated by the interview structure:

Theme 1: Career Choices, Progression & Turning Points

Theme 2: Childhood

Theme 3: Education

Theme 4: Personality, Motivation & Work Centrality

Theme 5: Conceptions of Success

Each theme opens with a presentation of overall findings arising from an examination of the qualitative data collated via the in-depth interviews. The inclusion of first-hand quotes from the research respondents emphasises the reality and richness of the study. Relating back to existing literature on career success and career development, each theme compares the similarities and differences between high-flyers with and without disabilities, and discusses the effects of gender and onset of disability. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the inter-relationships between these themes.

Chapter 7 presents overall conclusions and suggests how this research has contributed to the body of work about career success and disability. An analysis of how the disabled people perceived each of the five areas as contributing to their personal and professional development is then presented with a discussion of how these made them high-flyers. It then examines how the respondents' definitions of success are based primarily on internal criteria. Finally chapter 7 considers the research findings in a wider context, promoting its usefulness in different avenues of society, and proposing fruitful areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2:

“The reasonable man [sic.] adapts himself to the world, the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

(George Bernard Shaw)

THE ROLE OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

Introduction

This chapter opens by discussing the importance of disability as a social and medical phenomenon. This is followed by section 2.2 which examines the significance of work to today’s society. It goes on to discuss the employment situation of disabled people, providing quantitative evidence of the institutional discrimination they encounter in the labour market which limits the type of job they can do and opportunities for advancement. Further, it discusses the legislation enforced to avoid such discrimination, particularly the implementation and effects of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Section 2.2.1 explores the claim that disabled women are victims of dual prejudice, in employment and society as a whole. The literature affirms how being conceived as asexual and denied the wife/mother roles has driven disabled women to pursue high-flying careers.

The chapter moves on to section 2.2.2 which looks at how the Registrar General classifies occupations by social class. It explains that social class is a powerful determinant of occupational status for the disabled and non-disabled community alike.

Finally the chapter explains the different ways disabled people can be empowered and included as equal members of society.

2.1 What is disability?

2.1.1 Disability as a social or medical phenomenon

The definition of 'disability' follows the growing orientation of disability rights and disability politics that developed from active groups of disabled people in society, particularly from the 1970s. Arguments over definitions are often reduced to technical issues, but they are, in effect, fundamental to the whole issue of equal opportunities and legitimise one way of thinking over another (Swain et al, 1993).

Prior to the emergence of the politics of disability, disability was construed as a purely medical phenomenon, reducing it to a problem of the individual. All professions, especially the medical profession, failed to involve people with disabilities in decisions which affected them, but instead, treated them as passive objects of intervention, treatment and rehabilitation (Oliver, 1990). This is supported by French (1986a), who contends that people with disabilities believe that medical professionals are unable to perceive them other than as people needing help, and that they become disturbed if their diagnosis is contradicted.

There is ample evidence to suggest that disabled people are frequently dissatisfied with the care they receive. Sutherland (1981) discovered that many disabled people have recollections of medical staff treating them in a patronising and alienating manner. This is supported by evidence presented in Chapter 6.

According to the traditional individualistic medical model, the reason why disabled people encounter inequalities and discrimination in their daily lives is because they deviate from the societal norm. So, in this respect, disability is explained in terms of individually-based functional limitations. Such a notion maintains that disability is seen as a personal tragedy, an approach that is recognised as considerably harmful to disabled people, inevitably propagating the downward spiral of the social and economic position of this minority group. Furthermore, this approach encourages the development of social policies which attempt to compensate victims for the misfortune that has befallen them and which do not accord them many of the basic rights to citizenship; thus encouraging dependency. Segregated education and the benefits system were cases in point (Oliver, 1996). For instance, the provision of segregated education was seen as beneficial for disabled children as it offers them specialist teaching and access to small classes with suitable facilities. Further, it has been argued to protect disabled children from the “rough and tumble” of a “normal” environment (Barnes, 1991; Middleton, 1999). However Barnes (1991) argues that being in a segregated school community shields individuals from the realities of society, socially isolating them and failing to teach them the skills necessary to grow up and lead an autonomous life style. As argued by the BCODP (British Council Of Disabled People) (1986), segregated education reinforces the myth that disabled people are

'eternal children'. The benefits and drawbacks of segregated education will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 4.

However, as argued by Hendey (1999), disabled people can and do face problems as a direct result of their physical impairment. Individuals can develop painful muscle spasms and respiratory tract disorders (Bax and Smyth, 1989; DCDP, 1992; Morris, 1989; Chamberlain et al, 1993). These may place a severe burden upon the individual in terms of pain, reduced mobility and increased dependency, and associated difficulties in achieving adult status through employment, having an active social life or enjoying a romantic partnership. Therefore it is important to stress that not all the problems faced by disabled people are social in origin. Some are directly linked to an individual's impairment and the 'management' of such.

Hendey (1999) maintains that although disability does have a personal cost, and this cannot be omitted from the equation, it is not the sole cause of the difficulties encountered by disabled people. The medical perspective of disability fails to acknowledge the extent to which disability results from the restrictions and disabling barriers caused by the social construction of a society designed to meet the needs of the non-disabled majority.

Swain et al (1993) argues that disabled people are often denied full citizenship due to disabling dimensions that serve to permeate the physical and societal environment. These include attitudes, institutions, language and culture, organisation and delivery of support services, and the power relations and structures of which society is constituted. This is supported by Barnes (1991) who defines disability as:

“the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers”.

The socio-political vantage point, presented by Hahn (1988), recognises that the fundamental restrictions of a disability may be located in the surroundings people encounter rather than in the disabled individual. This perspective rejects the personal tragedy approach taken by the medical model. Even though it still underpins Wood's (1981) conceptualisation of physical disability (seen as lacking the ability to perform an activity in the manner considered normal for a human being) this theory of disabled people being victims of social oppression is, undeniably, having an influence on society's motivations to create full democratic participation by the 21st century.

Although Wood's individual-based perspective of disability has been identified as being particularly useful in differentiating the social consequences of the impairment from the impairment itself, Croxson (1984) criticises the approach for attempting to de-politicise what is essentially a political issue. She argues that because Wood's classification is largely blinkered by the assumed benevolent neutrality of medical knowledge, its vision fails to capture the degree to which disability emerges as being socially constructed. This social interpretation of disability emerged in the early 1970s during the combined struggles of disabled people living in residential institutions and the community. The focus was on strengthening the spontaneous demands of disabled people for full integration into all aspects of mainstream society. Some years later the social interpretation of disability was developed and explained by Mike Oliver, a disabled academic, as a 'social model of disability'. However, although the social model helped spread the idea that the way society is organised is disabling, the fact that being

'normal' is still very important for employment, promotion, and gaining an independent livelihood, means that the medical model also remains extremely significant to the lives of disabled people.

Both of the perspectives discussed above are central to the understanding of the life and career development of the disabled people, an important focus of this thesis. As reported in the literature reviewed in Chapter 4, and evidenced by the voices of the respondents in Chapter 6, the medical model of disability had a significant influence on what was expected of disabled children by their parents, the medical profession and society as a whole. According to the medical interpretation of disability, individuals with impairments are helpless, dependent and incapable of making their own decisions (Shearer, 1981). Therefore the medical perspective invariably influenced the childhood socialisation of the respondents, in terms of what their parents expected of them, gender socialisation or lack of it, the experiences they had as children, and the relationships they developed with others. Further, it encouraged the decision for disabled children to be educated in segregated institutions, seen to protect them from the mainstream world, but denying them the opportunity to develop and succeed as independent adults. So, as education and childhood is seen as important to occupational choice and achievement, one can argue that the medical perspective of disability had an important part to play in understanding what drove the respondents' career development and success.

This thesis also recognises that, for disabled people, their impairment is an important part of their self, and does invariably have an impact on how and when their life moves from one stage to another, and the range of choices available to them. For example,

young disabled people may experience frequent periods of hospitalisation and treatment, due to their medical condition, which can cause severe disruptions to their education and future orientations.

However, this study has also undeniably been inspired by the social model of disability to highlight how the social and physical organisation of society has contributed to the disabling of individuals with physical impairments, and serves to hinder their democratic participation in mainstream activities such as education and employment. For instance, an article in the *Psychologist* (1995) reported how potential undergraduate students with disabilities still have to apply to universities that are physically accessible and have appropriate facilities rather than those with the most suitable courses. Similarly, Preece (1995), in a survey of the educational experiences of 44 disabled adults, identified barriers to course attendance at both attitudinal and practical levels, often resulting in under-achievement.

As both the social and physical structure of society, and individuals themselves, influence individual life development, and can, in turn, modify subsequent experience and induce positive change, both perspectives of disability are important to understanding the career development of the disabled high-flyer. Further, both have influenced the decision to use the terms “disabled people”, “people with physical disabilities” or “people who are physically impaired” interchangeably, in this thesis, to mean:

Individuals with mobility, dexterity and/or speech impairments whose life development has been influenced by their individual differences as well as social and physical barriers in society.

Such a definition is appropriate to the current study as it includes the disability imposed by societal institutions and the disability taken on board as part of an individual's identity. It also can be used as one of the selection criteria to identify potential respondents for this study.

2.2 Disabled People at Work

An individual's status in economic society is somewhat determined by the expectations and ideologies of many agents of socialisation and the psychosocial structure of society (that is, the social factors and individual interactive behaviour that influence the composition of society). Knowledge of an individual's status indicates their social and political beliefs and their resultant placement in the social system. Furthermore it attributes various characteristics, expectations of others and patterns of behaviour to the individual. As Vroom (1964) postulates, a person's status greatly influences the way in which other people respond to him. For instance, according to Young (1981), doctors are often viewed as God-like figures; strong, powerful, clever and in control of some kind of magic. This popular, socially approved image of health professionals can, itself, be a barrier for disabled people, who are generally perceived as being weak and ineffective (French, 1986a), to succeed as health and caring professionals. It is possible that some of these negative perceptions of disabled people may colour professional attitudes, albeit unconsciously, and thus cause an otherwise conventional career path to be redirected.

Numerous studies suggest that, like women and people from ethnic minorities, disabled people are particularly influenced by perceived acceptance or rejection, by others, of their achievements (Freeman, 1971; Horner, 1972). According to Government

statistics (Office of Population Census and Surveys, 1988; DfEE, 1996) and research projects they come out extremely badly on nearly every aspect of mainstream life. Such aspects include employment (Barnes, 1991), education (Barton, 1988; Tomlinson, 1985) and social class (Borsay, 1996).

There is little dispute that people with disabilities are more likely to be out of work than their non-disabled contemporaries (Barnes, 1991). In the mid-1960s the general unemployment rate was below 2% whilst among disabled people it was over 7%. In the early 1980s the gap narrowed somewhat not because unemployment among disabled people declined but because of the rise in unemployment generally (Grover and Gladstone, 1982). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) consistently demonstrated that people who have a health problem or a disability which limits the kind of work they can do, have high rates of unemployment (EOR, July/August 1994). Its statistics show that in the summer of 1993, 25% of men and 18% of women in this category were unemployed, compared with unemployment rates of 12% and 8% respectively in the working population as a whole.

In some cases disabled people are discouraged, by explicit governmental regulations, from accepting employment for fear of their welfare income or subsidised medical coverage and attendant care being deducted or taken away altogether (McCarthy, 1988; IFF Research, 1990). Benefits awarded on grounds of incapacity for work, such as Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA), may be lost completely when an individual actively seeks work or receives employment training. Evidence by IFF Research (1990) notes that there have been many instances where disabled people have found employment and then realised the money they earn in wages does not match what they

got from state benefits, and is not sufficient to live comfortably and cover disability-related expenses. Current social security arrangements – particularly the complexity of the system, the humiliation of the claiming process, and the uncertainty of its outcome – make it particularly difficult for disabled people to move between unemployment and employment (Barnes, 1991). Therefore, one can argue that the welfare system is a major factor in the discriminatory process and perpetuates dependency among disabled people.

The Government's Disability Discrimination Act, implemented in December 1996, provides a number of new rights to disabled people, attempting to illegalise their segregation from various spheres of mainstream society, including employment, goods and services and accommodation. The Bill makes all UK employers of 20 or more employees legally liable for discriminating against disabled persons in recruitment, promotion, training, working conditions and dismissal. Clause 6 of the Bill imposes a duty on the employer to make reasonable accommodations in cases where working arrangements or physical features of the premises place the disabled person concerned at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled persons.

However, even with such legislation there is a substantially lower percentage of disabled people in employment. According to recent evidence, reported in the Labour Force Survey (Spring 2001), the economic activity rate for people with disabilities was approximately half that of non-disabled people; the rates were 41% and 85% respectively. It also shows that disabled people are nearly eight times as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits. However the survey indicates that the differentiation between the two groups is less substantial in their type of

employment, although disabled people are slightly more likely to work in non-manual jobs or be self employed. Quantitative data generated from the survey demonstrate the likelihood of pursuing part-time employment is similar for people with and without disabilities.

The Employer's Forum on Disability states that only 9% of disabled people report themselves as actively looking for work. However, according to RADAR(1993), the Royal Association for Disability And Rehabilitation, many disabled people currently classified as "economically inactive" might be seeking work if appropriate conditions were available. These may involve work schedule modification (Lysaght et al, 1994) and making adaptations to existing premises, workplaces and equipment. Such measures need not necessarily be complicated or expensive.

When disabled people do find work, the majority find themselves in poorly-paid, low-skilled, low-status jobs which are both unrewarding and undemanding - a phenomena known as underemployment (Walker, 1982; Thomas, 1982). Walker discovered that in 1982, an overwhelming majority of disabled school leavers were concentrated to the lower sector of the labour market. A Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR) survey (1989) found that considerably greater numbers of disabled workers were employed in semi-skilled jobs compared to their non-disabled counterparts. In addition, it indicated that only half as many disabled men as non-disabled men occupied professional and managerial positions. According to official statistics from the Employment Forum on Disability, .12% of disabled workers occupy professional or managerial positions compared to 21% of their non-disabled counterparts. In their study of successfully employed women with disabilities, Hayslip (1981) and Johnson

(1980) revealed that the majority had achieved careers at the lower end of the service sector, and very few of them were employed in managerial or professional occupations. French (1986a), in a content analysis of the career literature of 26 health and caring professionals, discovered that disabled people were never specifically invited to apply for the jobs, yet ten of these occupations sought candidates with the ability to empathise and understand ill and disabled people.

Despite the strong body of evidence to suggest that disabled people are as efficient, if not more efficient, than their non-disabled counterparts (Kettle, 1981) they are frequently assumed to be less capable than non-disabled workers, to have a relatively high rate of absenteeism and to be more accident prone (Kettle 1983). Furthermore, it is believed that disabled people do not possess the appropriate communication skills required to adopt a professional role. Many of these negative conceptions of disability stem from the Bible and in 19th and early 20th century fiction which, Rieser and Mason (1990) suggests, can have a powerful influence on public beliefs and perceptions. Classical literature, used for education, such as *Treasure Island* and *Heidi*, which portray characters with impairments as pitiful, sad and dependant on others, can generate prejudicial attitudes against people with disabilities which can have a negative influence on how their life develops in a non-disabled society.

2.2.1 Women, Disability and Employment

While all people with disabilities experience an obvious disadvantage in the labour market, both disabled and non-disabled women are less likely to be employed than their male counterparts. In 1984, Kutner found marked differences in both groups. Blaxter (1976)'s study illustrated, through case studies, the obstacles encountered by

female job seekers, with and without professional qualifications. It was postulated that, despite the considerable sexism in the employment sector, the greatest obstacle proved to be physical disability. This implies that, for a disabled woman, the disability plays a predominant role in the formulation of identity status, and that gender is secondary to this. For instance, when a feminist woman who is disabled decides not to act out the feminine role, her behaviour will not be recognised as a positive act, but as part of being disabled (Campling, 1981a). However, according to Low (1996:246), a non-disabled identity can be achieved if people with disabilities successfully negotiate the physical environment which, in its inaccessibility, isolates them from interaction with others, thus emphasising their disability identities.

Perry's (1984) research found a tendency for women with disabilities to feel they are less likely to attract a supportive spouse and, consequently experience greater pressure to take on the breadwinner role than other women. Furthermore, one of the most common assumptions made about disabled women is that they are asexual (Matthews, 1983; Hayslip, 1981). They are not expected to engage in romantic relationships and, if they do, long-term relationships are expected to dissolve as a consequence of the disability. It can be argued that women with disabilities try to compensate by being better at their work, and by becoming super achievers (Hayslip, 1981). This need for disabled women to excel themselves in work can be argued to be engendered by their desire to find a purpose to their life as they are denied the opportunity to fulfil traditional wife/mother roles, they may go down another avenue to discover their life's purpose. By pursuing high-status careers, women with disabilities may have the opportunity to override their ascribed status and develop an identity that is respected by society. Slappo & Katz (1989) indicated, in their survey of women with disabilities

in non-traditional careers, that the 170 women were predominately unmarried and had a great deal of personal initiative, persistence and assertiveness. Although the women with disabilities in professional occupations were not dissimilar to their non-disabled counterparts in terms of their characteristics and drive, the obstacles to their careers differed. It was found that the women with disabilities experienced prejudice concerning their disabilities whereas the career journeys of the non-disabled women were hindered by their gender. This topic will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

2.2.2 Social Stratification and Class

The concept of social stratification refers to any arrangement of structured inequality among social groups and is derived from the multi-layered structure of society. In modern societies the most important of these layers is social class, which is used to compare, categorise and differentiate individuals and groups on the basis of their occupation. As defined by Reid (1981):

“social class is a grouping of people into categories on the basis of their occupation.”

(cited in Social Class Differences in Britain; p6)

In Britain, the best known hierarchy of stratification, based on social class, is the Registrar General's Scale of Social Classes. The Registrar General had a list of 20000 separate occupational titles which were grouped into 223 occupational units and categorised into 5 social classes. Occupations entered in a given class are, as far as possible, of comparable general standing in the community. Educational and economic factors are of great importance in deciding which class a particular occupation is allocated. There is a strong correlation between a person's income, their educational

achievement and their social class. According to the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations (1970) social class I is exclusively non-manual (professional), and V exclusively manual (unskilled). Classes II and IV are mixed, although the former is predominantly non-manual and the latter predominantly manual. Persons whose basic occupational status is class IV or V, but who have achieved foreman or managerial status are allocated to class III. Most of the respondents who were targeted to participate in this study were from classes I and II. However one of the respondents, who was used as a pilot for the interview schedule (as discussed in Chapter 5) worked in a class III type occupation due to the difficulty of finding a disabled person in a high-status occupation at such short notice and with the limited time available.

Occupations are not only recognised as a deciding element of social class, but also, as Monk (1970) maintains, as the backbone of social grading because, in all societies, they are differentially rewarded. Income is obviously an important determinant of possessions, style of life and place of living in a society based on a cash nexus (Reid, 1981). Since, for much of society, income is the main source of wealth, occupation is a good indicator of the economic situation of a person and a family. Furthermore, pursuing an occupation takes up a considerable amount people's time and life, and typically places them in a situation where they interact with particular groups of people in particular ways. Thus it is inevitable that an individual's experience of work influences their perception of the world. This is emphasised by the words of Adam Smith:

“The very genius which appears to distinguish men of different professions, when grown up to maturity, is not upon many occasions so much the cause, as the effect of the division of labour.”

(Adam Smith taken from *Sociology of Work*; O'Donnell; 1981; p124)

He contends that the differentiation of life styles of middle and working class citizens is more a consequence of nurture as oppose to nature. This can be illustrated from data collected by the American National Opinion Research Centre that discussed the relationship between family income, father's occupation and education, and the student's plans for graduate study. Of those participants whose father's occupational status was classified 'professional', 38.5% of them had plans for further study, compared to 21.8% whose fathers were farmers. Judging by these statistics it is evident that family background, in terms of social class, somewhat determines occupational aspirations and social participation.

Gottfredson (1981) argues that children's differential occupational aspirations can be explained by differences in social class groups. She notes that individuals from lower social class backgrounds are more positive about lower-level jobs than are individuals from higher social classes. This is similar to the findings of Sewell & Shah (1968) who demonstrated a significant positive correlation between social class and aspirations. Their study evidenced that the higher social class youngsters, within all ability groups, have the higher aspirations. Similarly Bowles and Gintis (1976) insisted on the unimportance of the genetic inheritance of I.Q. and the prime importance of socio-economic background in explaining economic success. The best hope for obtaining a high income, they maintain, is to be born into a high socioeconomic background. Although social class is not static throughout an individual's life, the social class

background into which they are born is undoubtedly a major factor in their future life status. It is an influential agent for the type of education, peer group, interests and activities pursued, as well as occupational choice and success.

Although class is an extremely powerful determinant of occupational status, the strength of its influence is diluted if the other psychosocial variables in the individual's make up do not conform to those of the social expectations. Although disability is more common in the working class (Wedge & Prosser, 1973), disabled people are still more likely to be unemployed and in low paid jobs when class is held constant. For instance a middle class disabled man may not share the same privileges and opportunities as a middle class non-disabled man. However, Pfeiffer (1991) reports that the social class structure that enables white males to have access to education, high-status occupations and high income still prevails in the disability community. According to his study, disabled white men from middle class backgrounds still have certain advantages over their working class counterparts in their quality of life, and diversity of opportunities. They are more likely to be financially supported, which could facilitate the enjoyment of better health and provision of facilities to help create an accessible environment. It can be confidently stated that the higher the social class from which an individual comes, regardless of their physicality, the greater the probability that he/she will aspire to those occupations that society has defined as the most socially prestigious and economically rewarding. Larson (1977) argues that the relative superiority over, and distance from, the working class is one of the major characteristics that all professionals and would be professionals have in common. Furthermore, Sutherland (1981) contends that it is much easier to counteract the stereotyped issues of disability on which discrimination is founded if one has a middle

class background and accent, a university education, and the particular type of articulacy and confidence these factors produce. Therefore it is fair to say that the power of class still predominates in the disability community and is recognised as a major determinant of occupational status.

2.3 Prospects for disabled people in the 21st century

As discussed earlier in the chapter, disabled people are far more likely than non-disabled people to be economically inactive. This stems from the fact that the majority of people in the former group are only too aware of the physical and social obstacles facing them in their search for work. They are also more likely than their non-disabled counterparts to be underemployed, or work in the secondary labour market where jobs have low wages, low skill levels, poor working conditions, little job security, and few if any possibilities for promotion and advancement. Routine office work, general labourers, catering jobs and cleaners would fall into this category (McCrudden, 1982). There is not only a problem with getting employed; staying employed has also been seen to be a problem for disabled people. The findings of recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, reported in *Disability Now* (December, 2000), revealed that one in three disabled people lose their jobs within a year of starting.

However, it is widely recognised that people are the key to success in any work arena. Talented people, whether disabled or non-disabled, are a valuable commodity and worth the investment of time and resources (Foster & MacLeod-Gallinger, 1999). The fact that a person has a disability does not necessarily mean they do not possess the skills required to become economically active and proficient in a particular line of work. Whilst society is never free of discrimination and different forms of prejudice,

certain individuals have the ability to combat the prejudice, turn the obstacles into opportunities and achieve success against the odds. Although each disabled person may have been driven to achieve success by different personal attributes or experiences, empowerment of the disability culture may also be facilitated by various societal developments. One is information technology, which is increasing in influence and importance in the corporate world. An article entitled "New Technology & Jobs", printed in *Personnel Management* (1995), reported that technology has changed the nature of jobs in a typical organisation. Its introduction has created opportunities for people with disabilities, who are usually at a disadvantage when competing for jobs with their non-disabled contemporaries. Many studies have confirmed that this minority group share a vested interest in technology which provides them with the means to overcome communication barriers and neutralise the effects of many kinds of disablement (Hawkrige et al, 1985). This is supported by Cornes (1988) who suggests that new technologies create new jobs, in which physical requirements are replaced by electronic skill, precision and strength, and which are particularly suitable for people with disabilities.

Moreover, the introduction of telecommunications systems has enhanced the globalisation of industrial activities over international boundaries, while at the same time reducing the need to travel on a regular basis. This shift towards the 'mobile worker' has created opportunities for people with disabilities in the employment sector as the telecommunication links between individual remote terminals grant access to communication world-wide from one physical location. Therefore technology has permitted individuals with physical impairments to succeed in employment as it allows

them to establish global connections without the need the travel, and, as this thesis discovers, it enables disabled people to deliver lectures without the need to speak.

Other societally induced facilitators for increasing the participation of disabled persons in the labour market include legislation such as the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill, originally enforced in 1993 and amended in 1996. This engendered the use of “reasonable accommodations”, including acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, provision of qualified readers, personal assistants or interpreters, reduction in working hours and reallocation of certain secondary duties. These accommodations were seen, by governmental legislation, as a way of providing workers with disabilities with the means to achieve their most desirable goals. Work schedule modification was thought to enhance the success of employees with severe disabilities who may have limited tolerance for “productive work activity” (Lysaght et al, 1994). This was evidenced by an investigation conducted by Lysaght et al (1994) which indicated that, in many instances, the occupational success of people with disabilities is partly attributed to work schedule modification. The investigation revealed that the process of job schedule modification has positive implications for this minority group, in that it not only enhances their quality of life, but also leads to an improvement in job performance. Therefore, although, as argued by Milton Friedman (1970), the primary social responsibility of a business may be to maximise profits, the workforce has to be presented with desirable social processes by which an increase in profits can be achieved.

Another important factor to this optimism regarding the career success of disabled people is the strong, vibrant, and international disability movement (Oliver, 1990). The

sheer size of the disability problem has engendered the establishment of organisations and companies that create opportunities for disabled people, who were rejected by mainstream employers, to work and build a career of their choice. Such companies include Graeae, a national touring theatre company for disabled people which employed some of the high-flyers in this study before they moved into more mainstream work. Another such company is Candoco, an international integrated dance company. This professional dance company of disabled and non-disabled dancers was established and is managed by a disabled woman, another one of the high-flyers in this study.

The increasing emergence of disability-related organisations such as Scope, RADAR, and Skill, which seek to serve and represent disabled people, also creates new employment opportunities for people with disabilities at all levels of the organisational hierarchy, including managerial and professional levels. Furthermore many of the strategies implemented by customer service organisations to serve the needs of disabled population have called for the advice of, and consultation with, disabled people themselves. The growth, both of disability organisations, and of disability related work in mainstream organisations, provide opportunities for disabled people to use their skills and experience to help a disabled customer base, whilst building a career for themselves. This is exemplified in the current study by the career situation of some of the respondents.

Finally, the appearance of many more disabled people in general mainstream social intercourse is beginning to change public consciousness concerning the ability of disabled people. It has been suggested that people within society might become more

tolerant of accepting disability if they were more aware and had greater understanding of it. Increased integration of disabled people into mainstream activity would facilitate this process. Furthermore it would serve to disprove traditional stereotypes and misrepresentation of disability in the media and popular discourse. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, in history, disabled people have been represented as passive, destructive, dependent and tragic. However their recent inclusion and involvement in economic production and mainstream culture have served to dilute such negative images and generate more positive interpretations of disability. As this thesis will show, disabled people can and do occupy respectable and prestigious positions in mainstream society, which not only serves to change traditional attitudes and ideas about who they are, but also can override their disability identity.

2.3.1 Social influences on career development

Existing literature on career success (e.g. White et al, 1992; Cox & Cooper, 1988; Cooper & Hingley, 1985) has shown that in addition to society as a whole, social institutions like the family, education and work have had a significant influence on the social, psychological, intellectual and physical development of individuals. These institutions also serve to emphasise the potency of attributes internal to the individual by stressing the significance that personality has on achievement behaviour, career decision making and career direction. The impact of these individual life spheres on people's career progression has received much attention in previous research based on the non-disabled individual. The body of literature concerning how social institutions like family and education, and individual attributes like personality and motivation influence the development and future choices of disabled and non-disabled people is examined in great depth in Chapter 4 and again in Chapter 6.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter discusses the history of disability, including how and why it developed from a medical to a social phenomenon, and how the two perspectives of disability are relevant to this thesis. A review of statistical evidence then reveals the underrepresentation of disabled people in professional and managerial occupations, and their high concentration in the secondary sector labour market where there is little opportunity for advancement. It indicates that even with the recent rise in employment levels, disabled people still tend to suffer higher rates of unemployment or underemployment compared to their non-disabled counterparts. However employment rates seem to be better for disabled men than for disabled women who tend to be doubly penalised in employment, for their dual minority status. The literature indicates, however, that the discrimination against disabled women is still likely to be based on their disability as opposed to their gender. In addition, many disabled women are not expected to fulfil traditional female roles of wife and mother. This supports the argument that, for disabled women, disability is the primary attribute of their identity status, overriding their gender. However it has been suggested that despite the barriers against disabled women in employment, they feel pressure to excel in the work arena to gain a sense of self-worth and purpose. This issue will be explored further later in the thesis, with a group of female high-flyers with acquired and congenital physical impairments.

The perpetual development of new technologies is discussed with respect to how it has enabled disabled people to work alongside their non-disabled colleagues in the 21st Century labour market. The importance of disabled and non-disabled people

interacting in mainstream situations must be emphasised, as it is this that increases public awareness, changes attitudes and facilitates societal equality.

The Registrar General's Scale, used to select respondents for this study, has been discussed with respect to its origin and intentions. It is known to be the most common in Britain, and has divided 20000 occupations into five social classes, thus signifying the relationship between one's occupation and place within the stratification system. The literature emphasises the strong correlation between education, income and social class in the disabled and non-disabled community, believing that the latter has a significant influence over the quality of life of disabled people. It also points to the impact of parental occupations on the occupational aspirations and destinations of their children.

Finally the chapter briefly looks at what is believed to facilitate the career development and success of disabled people in the future. This includes the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation that has encouraged employers to be more inclusive in their recruitment strategies and also make their work sites physically accessible. Further, the government has established schemes to provide disabled people with any equipment required to enhance their productivity in the workplace. This gives employers an incentive to have disabled people in their employ because not only do they no longer have to pay for the extra cost incurred but the accommodations made are likely to benefit other employees, enabling them to work more efficiently and effectively.

In the light of the potential opportunity for people with physical disabilities to reach positions of power and influence, and the dearth of research in the area of career

success for disabled people, it seems viable to investigate the issues facing people with physical impairments, either congenital or acquired, as they strive for top jobs. In looking at four areas of human development: childhood, education, personality, career choices and progression, this research attempts to identify the sources and symptoms of the disabled high-flyers' success, any barriers which were faced, and the coping strategies adopted, if any, to negate these barriers.

Before discussing how the four areas of development influence career success in Chapter 4, the following chapter intends to review literature concerned with universal, societal and individual measures of success. It attempts to promote the importance of internal subjective measures of career success, especially for disabled people who, for reasons disclosed throughout the study, are prevented from achieving objective success.

CHAPTER 3:

Success is counted sweetest by those who ne'er succeed.

(Emily Dickinson)

MEANINGS OF SUCCESS FOR **HIGH-FLYERS**

Introduction

The literature concerning career success and the different ways it is conceptualised generally, by individuals and by society, is reviewed in sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this chapter. In section 3.2.1 the chapter examines the use of professional status as an objective measure of career success, concerning itself with why and how it is used by previous research to target 'successful' individuals. It also considers how other criteria, such as education and hours worked, are used to predict objective success. However, existing research on career success has been based principally on the non-disabled majority, not the disabled minority, the concern of this thesis. This is followed by section 3.3 which makes a case for the subjective career, stressing the value it has for personal development. Further it discusses the career as a two dimensional concept which connects the individual to the social structure of society. Section 3.3.1 discusses the increasing rate at which 'boundaryless careers' are becoming more desirable for some groups in today's society, especially groups who are more concerned with subjective success and are unlikely to measure success in objective terms. Disabled people are one of these groups who are likely to place a great importance on internal subjective measures of career success. One reason may be that they are susceptible to being victims of 'glass ceiling' advancement and pay

inequity, and could be, therefore, less likely to be recognised as externally successful. The chapter concludes by exploring the reasons why disabled people may not be able to achieve objective career success, and thus emphasises the importance of subjective perspectives of success to achieve high-flying goals.

3.1 What is Success?

It is becoming more apparent that the ways in which people perceive, think about and explain success can vary tremendously (Colwill, 1982). Lewis (1998) contends that for many, the desire for success is the driving force in their lives; some will achieve it through coincidence or luck but for others it requires careful planning and hard work. It can be large of scale and high in profile or it can be created in smaller, but no less valuable, nuggets of satisfaction – hidden from the outside world – that come from reaching personal goals. For example, for Evelyn Glennie, world famous solo percussionist, who was classified profoundly deaf at the age of 12, success has two dimensions:

“the private personal side of success where happiness needs to be achieved. Then there is what the public sees - ‘the Evelyn Glennie success’.”

(taken from *Reflections of Success*, Lewis, 1998, p416)

Further, success is driven by the individual and their perception of what it represents to them. Each person has his/her own preferences, perspectives and expectations. As is cited in Lewis (1998), success for David Blunkett, the Home Secretary (at the time of writing this thesis), is concerned with fulfilling desired aspirations and looking beyond obstacles. A universal definition of success has been propounded by the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1997) as being:

“the accomplishment of an aim, a favourable outcome; the attainment of wealth, fame, position; a thing or person that turns out well”.

This definition suggests that success has external and internal dimensions. Therefore it implies that success not only can be seen as something which can be quantified through external criteria such as hierarchical position and salary level (e.g. Melamed, 1995; O’Reilly and Chatman, 1994), but also can incorporate factors which are internal to the individual such as accomplishment of a personal goal. This bi-dimensional definition of success will be explored in more detail later in the chapter.

Success is a broad concept that can be applied to a variety of situations and contexts. One such situation is careers, the focus of this thesis.

3.2 Traditional Conceptualisations of Career Success

Derr (1986) defines career success as:

“...both being able to live out the subjective and personal values one really believes in and to make a contribution to the world of work”.

(cited in White et al, 1992, p7)

This incorporates both psychological success, which Hall (1976) describes as an individual’s feeling of success, and external measures of success. Alternatively, as Jasolka, Beyer and Trice (1985) noted, career success is an evaluative concept, so judgements of career success are dependent on who does the judging. In the past a career was defined as an organised path taken by an individual across time and space (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). Although this definition does not imply success or failure, it is usually perceived as reflecting systematic progression in any occupation (Hall, 1976). However, post-entrepreneurialism is hastening the demise of the

traditional hierarchical career. According to Kanter (1989) people no longer climb the career ladder, but instead become multi-skilled by moving from job to job.

In a body of previous writings, an individual's career success was said to be measured according to the judgement of others who evaluate other people's careers on the basis of relatively objective and visible career accomplishments, using the metrics of pay and ascendancy (London & Stumpf, 1982; Judge & Betz, 1994). Furthermore, research suggests that job tenure and total time in one's occupation are positively related to career attainment (Cox & Harquail, 1991; Gutteridge 1973).

Therefore, according to various theories of career success (as mentioned above), positive work related outcomes or achievements are a consequence of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. As extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of career success are conceptually and empirically distinct, many theorists including Judge & Bretz (1994), stress that it is important to consider both in order to provide a broad measure of career success. As Boudreau et al (2001) argue, career success reflects the accumulated interaction between a variety of individual, organisational and societal norms, behaviours and work practices.

3.2.1 Occupational Title

In the research literature, career success has usually been defined in terms of a person's occupational position (e.g. Kotter, 1982). Researchers often refer to this type of career success as objective success because it can be measured by objectively observable metrics such as income level and hierarchical position (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Kotter 1982). In the popular press, a selection

of discourses on careers promote the implication that individuals enjoy 'successful' careers by virtue of their positions, guaranteed through the use of specified antecedents including certain career strategies, education and the "proper" entrance requirements. Thus, for example, although there may be no particular formula for success, professionals may be considered 'successful' as they are required to undergo extensive specialised training and tend to excel in particular fields of expertise. Such was the criterion used by Lewis (1998) when selecting professionals to interview for his popular discourse, *Reflections on Success*. They were considered to have been successful in one or more particular fields. Their fields of expertise ranged across business, politics, art, entertainment, sport and journalism.

Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1944) suggested that the major criterion for professional status is the presence of an intellectual technique, acquired by special training, which performs a service for society and is unavailable to the laity. In Western society, as individuals progress up the occupational hierarchy as a result of increasing specialisation, they are likely to experience upward mobility in terms of their social status and income, and are ascribed a corresponding label which informs others of their achievement of objective success.

The most untrained observer recognises the connection between occupations and social status. An individual's occupational status defines them with respect to their position in society and becomes the source of motivation for career striving, which facilitates the setting and attainment of various goals. Knowledge of what a person does provides handy indicators of what a person has achieved and thus where they fit within the social system. This may be the reason why researchers, including White et

al (1992) and Cooper & Hingley (1985), used occupational status to identify their target sample. White et al, who conducted an investigation into female high-flyers, defined a 'successful woman' as one who had advanced up the organisational ladder to occupy executive or managerial positions in high-status occupations. Thus their sample included lawyers, management consultants, high-level politicians and accountants. Similarly Cooper & Hingley's (1985) 'Change Makers' were professionals who had made or were continuing to make a lasting change in attitudes within their own particular sphere of activity. These representatives were drawn from politics, industry, business, the arts and medicine. They included 32 individuals who were identified by their high-status occupational titles such as a Managing Director, Chairman of British Rail, and President of the National Union of Mineworkers. For Cox and Cooper (1989), in their study *The Making of a CEO*, a successful manager was defined as one who had reached the top of a major organisation.

Caplow (1964) believes that occupational title has displaced other status-fixing attributes such as ancestry, religious office, political affiliation, or personal character, and has become a meaningful indicator of individual income and educational attainment. An individual's occupational title indicates that they have made certain sacrifices to attain these highly valued positions in society. These sacrifices, according to functional theory, are later compensated for by the higher rewards attached to such societal positions.

3.2.2 Education

Level of education has been the human capital attribute that has been the subject of the most research (Judge et al, 1994). Research from the labour economics and

careers literature indicates that returns from educational attainment in terms of pay and occupational status are significant (Jaskolka et al,1985; Whitely et al, 1991). This view is also held by Walsh and Osipow (1983), who state that educational level is one of the most powerful predictors of career achievement in both men and women. For example, 50 per cent of the successful career women in White et al's (1992) study had a first degree, compared to only 6 per cent in general. Similarly out of the 30 female managers in Davidson's (1997) study, two thirds had degrees at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

Education, in many cases, is an essential prerequisite for certain types and extent of vocational participation. It is also a causal attribute of objective success in that it determines promotion in status and advancement in salary. As Burton R Clark states, in his article "Sociology of Education":

"Men become part of the potential labour force by qualifying for the work required, and increasingly, capability is defined by formal schooling. Advanced education offers competence; little schooling defines occupational incompetence. Thus occupational achievement is prefigured by education."

(cited in Hall, 1969, p.432)

As well as level of education, Judge et al (1994) argue that the quality (measured in terms of qualifications of the faculty members, admission requirements, curriculum and quality of instruction) of the university from which an executive earned his or her degree should positively predict objective success. They found the difference in earnings due to educational quality to be substantial. The Gourman Report (Gourman, 1993), the guide to higher education quality that assigns numerical scores measuring

university quality, rates virtually every degree-granting university in the U.S. on the basis of 18 criteria, including qualifications of faculty members, admission requirements, curriculum and quality of instruction. Executives who obtained their degrees from a university not recommended by the Gourman Report (i.e., those scoring a rating of 1) earned \$16,070 (approximately £8500) less per year than executives who obtained their degrees from a highly recommended university (i.e. those scoring between 4 and 5 on the Gourman Report). Over the course of a 20-year career, this could amount to an earnings disadvantage of \$320000.

However, although objective career success has been used, by many researchers including myself, to identify people in different positions of power, authority and wealth, the subjective evaluations of career success must not be ignored. Past research (e.g. Howard & Bray, 1988; Gattiker & Larwood, 1989) has suggested that subjective success to be positively, but moderately related to objective success.

3.3 Importance of subjective conceptions of career success

According to Bailyn (1989), the easiest option is to assume that external definitions coincide with internal ones. She suggests that it is instructive to note how readily one falls into the presumption that upwardly mobile careers are experienced as successful even when one's own definition specifically denies such a connection.

Nevertheless, some researchers have argued that it is imperative to give serious consideration to individuals' subjective conceptions of career success in order to gain an improved understanding of what they actually want from their careers, and the impact this has on their career development (Sturges, 1996; Driver, 1979). For

example, Sturges' (1999) study shows how more managers expressed a concern with things like accomplishment, achievement and personal recognition than with hierarchical position and pay alone, as can be illustrated by the following quote:

"If I felt my job was important and I met my criteria for doing a good job...and I could do that job well, then to me, that would be my definition of career success...it wouldn't necessarily mean being promoted or getting to the top of the tree."

(Sturges, 1999; p242)

Knowledge of how individuals define career success has been fundamental to the appreciation of the "success" and "failure" of a career, because, as Gunz (1989) states, a career that is perceived in "objective" terms "only scratches the surface" of what a career means to individuals. Further, as Sturges (1996) suggests, such knowledge about subjective career success will provide organisations with some indication of potential alternative focuses for future career development and human resource management initiatives. As Gattiker and Larwood (1988) contend, success criteria can help human resource specialists achieve a fit between the employee's real career opportunities and needs.

Therefore, as has long been acknowledged, careers have two dimensions, both internal as well as external. As Gunz (1989) suggests, the two facets of the career represent the processes of personal and organisational development for the individual. He argues that careers can be seen both as a means of personal development (sometimes called the 'subjective' career) and as a series of externally observable jobs (the 'objective' career).

Derr and Laurent (1989) see the two dimensional concept of the career as a link between the individual and the social structure which fuses the observable facts and the individuals' interpretation of their experience. They argue that the two dimensions are interactive and both are strongly influenced by organisational and national culture, as well as individual differences.

3.3.1 Subjective career success

The requirement to become more familiar with the internal career perspective, which makes reference to an individual's own preferences for development in an occupation, has been emphasised by examinations such as that conducted by Korman (1980). His study determined that managers often feel alienated with their careers, despite their objective success as indicated by position and income. Another study confirmed that when an individual's career expectations are not satisfied and they feel a lack of affiliation with fellow colleagues, they might experience personal and social alienation (Korman et al, 1981). Therefore, it is important to determine if people considered to have hierarchical success are satisfied with their own organizational advancement, because, as Gattiker & Larwood (1990) pointed out, individuals may feel differently about their accomplishments than an outsider might expect.

In addition, recent research findings suggest that individuals who are not hierarchically successful can still be very satisfied with their careers and thus feel successful (Russo et al, 1991; Keys, 1985; Chusmir, 1986). Gattiker & Larwood (1988) propose that there is a direct relationship between satisfaction and perceived career success, in that if an individual is satisfied in their career they are likely to believe they have achieved their success criteria. Thus, career satisfaction, in this sense, is believed to be derived from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers,

including pay, advancement and developmental opportunities. This implies that for many people success cannot be explained purely in objective external terms, such as pay and position.

Although research has established that pay and promotion opportunities affect job and career attitudes (e.g. Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Locke, 1976), career success, for some, may be evaluated in terms of their own goals which may be influenced by a number of factors including personal, social and physical. For example, as Greenberg and McCarthy noted, several studies have shown that women have lower expectations regarding pay and promotion than do men. This suggests that female executives may be equally satisfied with an inferior level of objective outcomes (Dreher & Ash, 1990) or, equivalently, be more satisfied with an equal level of objective outcomes, compared to male executives. In a survey of senior managers, Russo et al (1991) discovered that for men, the existence of rank and salary were significantly correlated with career satisfaction. However, this was not the case for women who were described as having “a differential sense of entitlement” and tended to perceive themselves on the same competence level as their fellow male colleagues despite being inferior according to external measures. Keys (1985) discovered the reason for this was that women evaluated their success more in terms of how difficult it was to achieve, rather than the level of their salaries.

A comparable argument could be made with respect to disabled people, especially high-achievers, whose subjective rather than objective career success is more likely to equal that of non-disabled high-achievers. This may be due to attitudinal, physical and social discrimination blocking opportunities for disabled employees to progress in

their career, and thus achieve objective success alongside their non-disabled colleagues. Furthermore, as was postulated by Miller (1991), expectations for upward mobility for employees with disabilities differ from expectations for non-disabled employees. He argues that society often expects disabled individuals to be satisfied just to be employed. However as evidenced later in this study, some disabled people do indeed achieve more than society expects in terms of career development and progression. Therefore although society's expectations of disabled people would inevitably have an influence on all disabled people, it is likely that disabled high-achievers are driven by stronger influences which allow them to rise above society's expectations and not be dragged down by them. Chapter 6 will examine what motivates disabled high-flyers to achieve beyond societal expectations in a disabling society.

Further, given their experience of upward mobility and career success, it is likely that these disabled high-flyers would perceive success to be more than just being satisfied to have a job. Such was the case with the disabled individuals in Baumann's (1997) study who were not content with working in low skilled jobs, and conceptualised success as about being productive, independent and doing a worthwhile job recognised by the rest of society. These concepts need to be explored further, and new research is required that incorporates "*expanded definitions of career success*" (Powell and Mainiero, 1992) and uses both internal subjective criteria, and external objective criteria to explain individuals' career success. This engenders the concept of a two dimensional career (as explored above in section 3.1) which according to Hall (1976), is crucial to understand fully the course of a person's work life.

3.3.2 *Boundaryless careers*

Career success by hierarchical advancement may be no longer available to many people. As Kanter (1989) points out, climbing the career ladder is being replaced by hopping from job to job. Career responsibility, she claims, is now in the hands of individuals who will need to acquire the current mix of “portable” skills in order to enjoy a “successful” career. Handy (1989) argues that the culmination of discontinuous change and new professionalism spells the end of a corporate career for most people.

Some believe that the traditional organisational career may be replaced by a boundaryless career, which moves across boundaries of separate employers and as such is independent of conventional organisational principles (Arthur, 1994; Mirvis and Hall, 1994). If a boundaryless career becomes reality, it will mean that, for increasing numbers of the working population, it may not be possible to base career success on any kind of organisational success at all.

Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that employees are changing the way they conceptualise work in terms of the time and effort they expend on work related activities. In the past, men were quite content to devote their lives to working their way up the company hierarchy while their wife looked after home and family. However, the changing organisation of society and expectations of its members has encouraged personal life not to be subordinated to work roles (Gerson, 1993).

The statement “Professional status is the key to a long life”, (*The Week*, 17 July 1999), is the focus of a research study which revealed that objective career success does have an impact on an individual’s persona and psyche development. Peluchette

(1993) suggests subjective career success has implications for one's mental well-being and quality of life, implying that individuals who feel successful are likely to be happier and more motivated, which in turn would enhance their performance. This indicates that there is a significant interrelationship between career success and life success. This is clearly evident when careers are seen as 'protean'. A protean career is a process which the person, not the organisation, is managing (Hall, 1976). It acknowledges that work and non-work roles overlap and jointly shape a person's identity and sense of self. Further, a protean career enlarges the career space to enable people to seriously consider taking time off to spend with growing children or to care for ageing parents under the rubric of attaining psychological success. Already there are examples of people 'downshifting' in their careers to pursue hobbies or regain peace of mind (Hyatt, 1990), doing volunteer work to give back to the community, and, of course, pursuing the option of working from home, from where house work can spill into paid work.

3.3.3 New ideas of measuring career success for disabled people

Prior examination of the literature indicates that much of the existing theory on subjective career success is based primarily on non-disabled individuals, thus adding significant weight to the calls for this particular area of research which investigates the personal conceptions of career success for disabled high-achievers. Although little, if any research has been conducted on the subjective perceptions of career success for disabled people, one can argue that their experience of workplace inequity and glass ceiling advancement can be likened to that of women and other minorities striving to reach senior positions. For example, Davidson (1997) believes that one of the major career barriers faced by women and minorities is attitudinal prejudice such as 'Think manager – Think white male'. The women in her sample felt at a

disadvantage compared to their white colleagues in terms of career prospects, recognition and feeling valued by their bosses. Similar prejudiced attitudes, such as the one given below by the manager of a major national company, have had causal effects on the advancement of disabled people in the workplace:

“Society is embarrassed and frightened of those people who are ‘different’, those who have physical disabilities. It’s this unease which makes the employment of a disabled person undesirable as their disruptive influence on a team at work can endanger the smooth running and the productivity of the organisation as a whole.”

(Graham et al, *An Equal Chance or No Chance*, 1990, p10)

Such attitudinal prejudice could be a possible reason why people with disabilities are likely to be disproportionately over-represented in manual, semi-skilled and unskilled employment and under-represented in managerial/professional occupations (Prescott-Clark, 1990). For the small percentage who do achieve managerial or professional status there is evidence of a disequilibrium in earnings between themselves and their non-disabled colleagues (Doyle, 1995). According to a study by Prescott-Clark (1990), on average disabled men earned £150-£199 per week before deductions, whilst the corresponding figure for non-disabled male workers was £200-£249. This can be supported by the Spring 1997 Labour Force Survey which reported that the average take home pay for non-disabled employees stood at £212, 8% higher than average earnings for disabled employees. However, this does not suggest that disabled people, given their differential psychosocial development, are unable to conform to the conventional idea of objective career success, which is measured in terms of hierarchical position and level of financial reward. Furthermore it does not

suggest that objective career success is not important to disabled people. It merely points out that the status and financial levels may be slightly less for this group compared to their non-disabled counterparts.

According to Priestley (1998), many disabled children and teenagers still attend segregated schools or respite care institutions which exclude them from formulating friendships and social networks that may be useful in their future lives. Further, disabled people's socialisation and development may be interrupted by medical intervention, drug treatments and discrimination etc which can inhibit their future educational and occupational opportunities. For instance, several universities and colleges are clearly opposed to the idea of admitting disabled people. Potential disabled students are refused admission on the grounds that they are a fire risk or are deterred from pursuing their academic goals due to lack of appropriate support and accessibility for people with impairments on certain mainstream courses (Barnes, 1991). Thus, people with disabilities are often restricted in terms of their choice of university and area of specialisation. Their choices are often dependent on disability-related issues which often do not conform to traditional measures of career success. For example, Swinyard & Bond (1980) and Warner & Abegglen (1986) suggest that a disproportionate number of successful executives are graduates from well-regarded universities. However, these universities may not be able to accommodate people with disabilities who, as a consequence of attending a more accessible university, do not fit the traditional model of a high-flyer. Furthermore, some researchers of career success (e.g. Swinyard & Bond, 1980; Useem & Karabel, 1986) suggest that certain types of education such as medicine, law, engineering, and business are rewarded with higher degrees of objective success than others. However, an individual's disability may

have a significant influence on the type of subject studied, thus, again, people with disabilities may be prevented from achieving high degrees of objective career success according to classical ideas of career success.

Due to the fact that classical ideas of career development are based on the premise that a career entails a pattern of full-time continuous working, (attaching little significance to social, personal or physical demands external to the work environment), it may be more difficult to apply them to disabled people. Lysaght et al (1994) argue that the activity tolerance levels of people with severe physical disabilities have a negative impact on their success in managing a full-time competitive work schedule. The findings of their study suggest that disabled people may often be out of step with orderly models of progression typified by the careers traditionally expected of non-disabled successful males. This may be due to a need to incorporate the influence of personal factors when measuring their career success. For example, a disabled person who suffers from fatiguability and loss of energy may produce work of a higher standard if he/she work on a flexible basis with regular breaks, rather than if they conform to the full-time continuous working pattern invoked by the classical model of career success based on the non-disabled male.

However, to remodel conceptions of success to incorporate the possibility that disabled people may not be able to work the hours considered average for 'successful' people may in itself affirm stereotypical attitudes of disabled people not being equal members of society's workforce. As Sutherland (1981) maintains, the more one conforms to the working patterns of mainstream economic society, the less significant

their disability becomes. Therefore, like the non-disabled high-flyer, the disabled high-flyer needs to work overtime to achieve objective success.

Such barriers, obstacles and influences to the attainment of objective career success, (which will be discussed in the following chapter), show that there is a serious need to recognise the importance of internal success. Chapter 4 reviews the literature of four areas considered by both, a body of work on career success, and the researcher of the current study, to have substantial influence on an individual's career success. These areas include Childhood, Education, Personality and Motivation, and Career Choice, Progression and Turning Points. However, the focus will be on the disabled individual who, due to their membership of a stigmatised minority group, may have a significant impact on the way in which career success is conceived, achieved and facilitated by the other four areas.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter sets out the arguments that surround the conceptualisation of personal success and career success. It examines the literature discussing the career success of high-flyers and the use of occupational status to identify such a minority. The literature reviewed reveals that the differential psychosocial development and societal influences encountered by disabled and non-disabled high-flyers means disabled high-flyers cannot always meet the criteria required to achieve traditional notions of objective career success, unlike their non-disabled peers. However it is not unlikely that both share similar subjective perceptions of career success. Given this view, it is critical that the concept of subjective career success is revisited and presented from the personal perspective of the disabled person. Such is the intention of this research.

The importance of the two dimensional career is examined. The subjective career is growing in importance, especially since boundaryless careers are increasingly being pursued and considered as more suitable to today's lifestyle than traditional hierarchical careers. However both the internal and external dimension of the career is crucial to completely comprehend the course of a person's work life. The findings presented in section 6.5 (Theme 5) of Chapter 6 attempt to fill the gap in the existing body of career success theory reviewed above by illustrating how disabled high-flyers conceptualise career success. This involves the respondents' definitions of success being categorised into internal and external criteria. Internal criteria are those which can not be measured objectively, and as such, are experienced internally by the respondents. External criteria are seen as observable metrics such as career progression and salary level that can be evaluated objectively.

CHAPTER 4:

*“Success has many fathers,
while failure is an orphan”*

(Ciaro)

WHAT MAKES A DISABLED

HIGH-FLYER?

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on four different areas which were hypothesised, and suggested by existing literature, as being significant to the production of high flyers in general, and particularly the ‘disabled high-flyer’. It divides itself into four sections, corresponding to the suggested influences of career success.

Section 4.1 examines existing theory in the field of childhood socialisation, demonstrating how it may differ for children with and without physical disabilities. It reviews the work of researchers from various disciplines such as disability, psychology, sociology and business, who explore the role of early socialisation and its part in determining the career orientation of adults, in particular successful adults. The selected focus covers factors such as social class background, and childhood experiences and events that were perceived as character building or particularly influential in developmental terms. In addition, it reports on evidence concerning how various patterns of parenting provided children with the impetus to achieve.

Section 4.2 begins by briefly reviewing the general history of education and the extent to which education is important to the type and extent of vocational participation. It reports on how the level and the subject of education are seen as predictors to the range of career opportunities available. From this general grounding, the review moves to a more specialised debate concerning the educational segregation and integration of individuals with physical impairments, examining the advantages and disadvantages of both with respect to career choice and professional opportunity.

Section 4.3 is concerned with the extent to which personality determines career success. It examines the hypothesis that argues that certain personality traits are typical of high-flyers, and moves on to identify what these traits are. Existing literature suggests that high-flyers show a wide variation in personality, so the researcher decided that the current study should focus on three major areas of personality and motivation, which previous research and the current hypothesis suggest might be important. These three areas are described under the headings of *Locus of control*, *Need for achievement* and *Work Centrality*.

Section 4.4 discusses the concepts of career choice and career progression, recognising the impact of different life roles on individual career choice. It also examines life-cycle theory, addressing the effect of interests and life events on career progression and direction. The section pays particular attention to the career patterns adopted by disabled people; attempting to uncover which career paths they are most likely to follow and the reasons behind this.

4.1: Childhood

Introduction

Developmental psychologists tend to view young children as often being moulded by the complex social world in which they live and grow into adults. Although many social factors and groups affect the process of socialisation, the family is frequently regarded as the most influential agency in the socialisation of the child.

As postulated by Hetherington & Morris (1978; p3):

“From the moment of birth when the child is wrapped in a pink or blue blanket, swaddled and placed on a cradleboard, or nestled in a mobile-fastooned bassinet, indulged by a tender mother or left to cry it out by a mother who fears spoiling the child, socialisation has begun”

Close attention is paid to an individual's early years, perceived by many as their most formative years, to identify the origins of later attitudes, behaviour, success or failure.

Such a contention is not recent but has recurred in a large body of writings ever since Plato (428-348 BC) who stated, in “The Republic”:

“The first step, as you know, is always what matters most, particularly when we are dealing with those who are young and tender. That is the time when they are taking shape and when any impression we choose to make leaves a permanent mark.”

(cited in Cox & Cooper, p.8)

Cooper & Hingley (1985) maintain that, for the group of high-flyers, the “Change Makers”, under their study, there was a definite connection between past childhood experiences and present occupational achievement. This was investigated by an

earlier theorist, Roe (1956), in her studies of the concept of need and the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping occupational interests. For example, in her report, she suggested that person-oriented occupations are selected more often by children with secure attachments in their childhood. However, having tested this hypothesis, Trice et al (1995), reject the view, asserting that there is no evidence of family structure determining occupational preferences. As Gottfredson (1981) discovered, many things determine the formation of occupational preferences including sex, age, race, and region of residence. Moreover, she asserts, from an early age one develops different conceptions about oneself in terms of who one is and is not, who one expects to be and who one would like to be. The projection of one's self-concept has a major impact on one's future orientations, and therefore an individual's occupational preferences can be argued to be significant attributes of, and highly compatible with, their sense of self.

Other theorists acknowledge that socio-economic background and intelligence are important predictors of vocational aspirations.

4.1.1 Social Class, Parental Occupation and Influence

4.1.1.1 Influence of Parental Occupation

The vast discourse on the impact of father's occupational status on their sons' futures demonstrates that social origins do, undeniably, lay down the foundation for a child's life. According to Blau and Duncan (1967) a man's social origins exert a considerable influence on his chances of occupational success. They contend that a father's occupational status not only influences his son's career achievements by affecting his

education and first job, but it also has a delayed effect on achievements that persist when differences in schooling and early career experience are statistically controlled.

Pronounced differences in social class and ability level are found among high school students, especially among boys. Research by Sewell & Shah (1968) indicated that within all ability groups, the higher social class youngsters had the higher aspirations. Further, as evidence from Eysenck & Cookson (1970) revealed, high achieving children are encountered more frequently in more affluent families where parental occupations are of a significantly high status, and the practised culture values hard work and encourages the achievement of high-flying goals. On investigating the family background of primary school children, the researchers found positive correlations between high occupational status of parents and children's academic success in school. A similar finding has been demonstrated by Cox & Cooper (1988), in their study of male high-flyers, a significant number of whom reported that their achievement-oriented parents were significant to their own successful future orientations. Moreover, as Katovsky, Crandall and Good (1967) believe, parenting styles practised by achievement-oriented parents serve to instil the child with the belief that their own behaviour, not external factors, will determine the reinforcements they receive. Therefore parental encouragement is important to the enhancement of self-esteem and the individual's successful mastery of challenges.

Furthermore, as has been established by a large body of literature, children aspire to the careers of their parents at rates significantly above chance (Holland, 1962; Werts & Watley, 1972). According to Trice et al's (1995) thesis, this could be caused by children being concurrently exposed to situations and talk related to parental work.

Their analysis argues that the family is the first link a child has with the occupational system. Professionals and executives, for example, attempt to instil in their sons the behaviours and mannerisms appropriate to their own status. Consistent with this is the work of R V Clements (1958), who found that the chances of young people from higher social class origins attaining a high occupational status is considerably greater than those of lower social origins.

4.1.1.2 Influence of Social Class

The parallel between the emergence of awareness of class symbols and the emergence of class differences in aspirations were found in more qualitative studies of vocational development. For example, Ginzberg et al (1951) discovered that all of the boys from the higher social class took it for granted that they were going to college. Conversely, none of their lower class counterparts did, either saying they were not sure or were definitely not going. Gottfredson (1981) believes that the existence of such differential choices among children in society is largely a consequence of societal stratification. Therefore, in most cases, youngsters will take the group of which they are a member as their reference group. For example a lower-class child is more likely to orient to the lower class and adopt its standards for success, and a middle-class child will orient to the middle class with its more demanding standards. Evidence suggests that youngsters use such social class references when evaluating their occupational futures. Gottfredson (1981) contends that as youngsters incorporate considerations of social class into their self-concepts, they reject occupational alternatives that seem inconsistent with the new elements of self. In particular, they reject options that are of unacceptably low prestige in their social reference group.

D Norburn (1986) discovered, in his comparison of British and American corporate leaders, that the UK manager comes from a 'professional', 'non-business' background, with *"parents who have already achieved that echelon of social status"*. Similarly, when investigating the significant antecedents of female high-flyers, White et al (1992) discovered that 75 per cent of the successful women in their study had middle class origins compared to 38 per cent of the general population with middle class origins. This finding is consistent with other studies of female managers, which have shown that they have predominately middle class origins (Hennig and Jardim, 1976; White, 1989). Other evidence emphasising the importance of social background on career choice comes from Simpson's (1984) study of female lawyers. The findings revealed that all of the lawyers had parents who instilled them with middle class values such as high achievement needs and the importance of education. Thus, as Himmelweit et al (1952) concluded, occupational aspirations and a sense of social mobility depend on the social class to which one orients.

The significance of social class background and parental occupation is deemed important to the career indecisions and aspirations of disabled people. The way and extent to which it influences the career success of the disabled high-flyers in my study is revealed in section 6.2 (Theme 2) of Chapter 6. In addition, the issue of gender socialisation and the influence it has on the professional and personal development of the sample group has been given some attention in this thesis.

4.1.1.3 Social Class Background of the Disabled Child

In much existing literature (e.g. Priestley, 1998; Watson and Shakespeare, 1998), disabled children are characterised by narratives of dependence, vulnerability and

exclusion, and described as a homogeneous grouping with few rights and choices to enable them to achieve universal standardised developmental targets (Morris, 1997). However, to accept such a theory would be to deny the fact that all children, regardless of their physicality, are social actors with the capacity to develop multiple identities shaped by a wide range of social influences such as race, gender and social class.

There is ample evidence to suggest that the socio-economic situation of a non-disabled child has a significant influence on their future achievement orientation and occupational preference. However, as Jahoda et al (1988) discovered, disabled children's aspirations about future employment seemed to reflect those of non-disabled children. Their 'future selves' seemed to be shaped less by disability status than by other social influences. Similarly, upon reviewing comments made by disabled teenagers in his study, Norwich (1997) maintains that their hopes and fears seemed to be more a reflection of their socio-economic background than their status of being disabled. As Ginzberg (1952) contends, children of age 11 to 14 are more likely to aspire to occupations in accordance with their interests, with the only constraints being father's occupation or parental suggestions. Thus socio-economic situation plays more of a pivotal role in the early years of the life of a disabled child than does disability itself.

Furthermore, even if external factors prevent disabled individuals from maintaining their social class origins due to intragenerational mobility, particularly downward mobility, their social class origins have already influenced the individual's self-concept and character formation during the early stages of their development. For

example class origins can affect one's educational and occupational opportunities, achievement values and moral judgements. As is emphasised by Kluckhohn (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961), the "core culture" of the middle classes not only stresses the importance of accomplishment and doing well but also other values facilitating the development of achievement needs.

Empirical comparisons of middle- and lower- class groups have usually found stronger needs for achievement in the former. Evidence from a nation-wide survey of achievement motivation cited by Veroff et al (1960) reported that the percentage of men with above-median achievement scores on a projective test was greater, the higher their educational and occupational levels. The correlation between education and achievement was exemplified in Pfeiffer's (1991) study of the socio-economic situation of disabled people. His qualitative investigation indicated that the social class structure which enable white males to have access to things such as education, jobs and higher income still rule in the disability community. His report suggested how better educated disabled persons were more likely to participate in full-time employment, and more likely than poorly educated disabled people to have a professional or managerial occupation. Furthermore, Sutherland (1981) believed that a middle class background could serve to reduce the negativity associated with disability. Such a thesis may be explained by the fact that disabled people nurtured within middle class environments are exposed to values and practices of working hard and doing well. Furthermore, as was explained by Priestley (1998), they have greater access to services and facilities, and higher levels of surveillance than their working class counterparts. This, in turn, permits occupational participation and induces

acceptance by non-disabled people, which, according to Sutherland (1981), becomes easier the more one conforms to the norm of the societal majority.

4.1.2 Gender Socialisation

Cottone & Cottone (1992) have suggested that women with disabilities comprise a double minority, in that they are “dis-abled” partly due to a defined disability, and partly because they live in a larger culture that de-values the contributions of women.

Being a female and having a disability both have consequences for the individual. In society, with its many agents of socialisation, each of these descriptions engenders preconceived notions, expectations and stereotypes. In both instances, according to literature reviewed by several researchers (e.g. the National Information Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 1990; Horner, 1972) it is the negative stereotypes that hold girls back or unnecessarily channel them along certain occupational paths.

Much statistical evidence demonstrates the occupational disparity, in terms of status and income, between males and females with disabilities. For example, the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner & Shaver, 1989) revealed that males with disabilities out of school for two years were most likely to work as semi-skilled or unskilled labourers (26%) or in service occupations (27%). It found that women were more commonly employed in service (58%) or clerical jobs (21%). In addition, it was discovered that being male, older, white and from a higher socio-economic background were factors that had significant influence on the high probability of competitive employment.

Hazasi et al's (1989) longitudinal study of students who attended segregated school suggested that, in the first year after school, males were more likely than females to be employed, to be employed full-time, and to remain employed full-time during the next two or three years. In addition, all of the female students with disabilities were employed in unskilled jobs, a discovery that was consistent across different studies, in a variety of areas, with a diversity of employment opportunities.

Gender differences not only exist in employment, but in many walks of life. However, much research shows that the seeds of future independence, self-sufficiency and productive employment are planted at home, with messages given by parents or guardians, consciously or unconsciously, from the earliest moments of children's lives. Hoffman (1972) asserts that boys and girls enter the world with different constitutional makeups. Evidence shows that this difference is reinforced by the way society treats, speaks to, and teaches children acceptable patterns of behaviour and social roles, in accordance with their gender. Typically, society expects and encourages boys to be sturdy, and to become self-supporting in the anticipation of the day when they have to support a family. They are nurtured to show more task involvement and more confidence. Conversely, girls are perceived as more passive and more reliant on others which could be connected to Hoffman's (1972) theory that girls are subject to more over-protection than boys, and thus prone to become more dependent on others, especially parents. Such protection, Hoffman asserts, may be detrimental to the child's exploratory attempts because they will doubt their own competence, be unwilling to face stress and have inadequate motivation for autonomous achievement. For instance, if a child receives help too quickly he/she

will be unable to develop a tolerance for frustration and, thus be more likely to withdraw from the difficult task rather than tackle it and tolerate the temporary frustration. Crandall and Rabson (1960) point out that this withdrawal behaviour is more apparent in female children.

Females are also more likely to be motivated by the desire for love and approval from parents, teachers and peers (Crandall, 1963; Crandall, 1964) and not encouraged to strive for mastery in occupational pursuits (Hoffman, 1972). Further, as the future “nurturers” of society, females are rewarded for their sensitivity to the needs of others and their ability to co-operate rather than aggressively pursue their own interests.

However, traditional stereotypes of males and females may be somewhat detrimental to girls with disabilities. Disabled children are assumed, by many, to be more dependent than non-disabled children. Boys with disabilities can often escape the disability stereotype of helplessness or dependence by aspiring to traditional male characteristics of competence, autonomy and work. However these are not traditional characteristics for females who are expected to fulfil housewife/mother roles. Yet such roles, regardless of their importance, are even less likely to be adopted by disabled women (Bowe, 1983). This may be, as Russo (1988) suggests, in part due to the societal myth that disabled women are asexual, and incapable of leading socially and sexually fulfilling lives. Drawing from her personal development she recalls that during her youth it was assumed that her disability would prevent her from finding a partner or having children.

Therefore Lang (1982) postulates that girls with disabilities are likely to confront two stereotypes: the “passive, dependent” female and the “helpless, dependent” person with a disability. This could place the individual in a situation resulting in rolelessness (Fine & Asch, 1988), producing low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence.

However, as indicated in Baumann’s (1997) study, such a stereotype sometimes generates a strong desire for disabled women to be productive and independent, and also a need to fulfil a purposeful role in society by having a career. Several of the women in the study wanted to leave a legacy through their work and, interestingly, these women had no expectations of having a family, a belief stemming from their early socialisation. Baumann believes that the lack of gender socialisation in childhood and the limited choices available to disabled women could make them more dedicated towards a career. Further she suggests that being born with a physical disability and the stereotypes that come with it had a significant influence on the women’s career aspirations in terms of driving them to work harder and occupy a higher status to divert attention away from their physical limitations.

4.1.3 Parental Expectations and the Development of the Disabled Child

Thomas (1998) argues that whilst parents and the wider family grouping can provide the disabled child with emotional security, promote a sense of self-worth, assist in opening up opportunities and encourage social inclusion rather than exclusion, they can also do the opposite. The narrative of one disabled woman in Thomas’ (1998) thesis exemplifies how, although parental ambition and encouragement to pursue ‘normal’ activities can be an asset to a child’s future orientation, it can also be disempowering. For example, the disabled woman recalls being nurtured in a highly

competitive family where her parents expected her to succeed as a non-disabled person. Her family's inability to acknowledge and engage with her physical difference and the wider disablist social reaction to this did not facilitate her acceptance of herself.

On the other hand, disability and impairment can add new twists to relationships with parents and can become a vehicle for the expression of emotional abuse and the erection of barriers. As Priestley (1998) contends, disabled children are deprived of growing up and experiencing the natural affinities in terms of gender, sexuality, culture and class. Furthermore, they may be excluded from the important patterns of social processes and childhood socialisation by differential mechanisms of surveillance and segregation. Some authors have raised the serious point that some disabled children are prevented from developing social skills and self confidence because their lives are controlled by adults (Morris, 1997; Norwich, 1997; Alderson & Goodey, 1998). Therefore, as postulated by Middleton (1996), a disabled child is likely to experience neither a normal childhood, nor adolescence, and is likely to be conditioned into an adulthood of dependency.

It can be argued that societal stereotypes of disabled people being passive and dependent have had extensive influence on parental expectations of their disabled children. Any preconceived expectations parents may have had of their disabled children tended to be measured according to the child's level of impairment, and influenced by the implications of bringing up a disabled child in a predominately non-disabled world. As the structure of society is based on the non-disabled majority, parents are unaware of what is physically achievable for people with disabilities and,

therefore are unlikely to push them in any particular career direction. However it may be argued that while parents may have no premeditated goals for their disabled child to aspire towards, the encouragement and support they do provide does indeed facilitate the generation of the child's full potential. This is supported by Wood (1973), who asserts that where parents are warm, loving, respectful to their child as a valued individual, and able to enhance her/his self-esteem, the child has the best opportunity to develop their personality to the full. Furthermore, the provision of such a nurturing environment permits the cultivation of individual potential. Consistent with this is White et al's (1992) study which reported that a high proportion of successful women in their sample had supportive, autonomy granting parents who had no rigid expectations of them other than for them to be happy. Musen et al (1979), contrary to Hoffman (1972) discussed above, assert that children who receive a lot of parental affection and attention, and have their needs gratified quickly, feel secure and are more likely to explore and move towards independence. Evidence reveals that such treatment is most likely for only or first born non-disabled children (Mussen et al, 1979; White et al, 1992). However this kind of parental treatment may also be prevalent in the socialisation of disabled children who often make care demands that go well beyond what is required of parents of young non-disabled children (Baldwin and Glendinning, 1982; Glendinning, 1983; Sloper and Turner, 1992). The volume of work that needs to be undertaken directly with the child, on both a routine and non-routine basis tends to be greater.

4.1.4 Childhood Experiences

4.1.4.1 Early trauma

The truth of Carlyle's words:

“The history of a man’s childhood is the description of his parents and his environment”

(cited in Cooper & Hingley, 1985, p.4)

has been revealed in the work of White et al (1992), Cox & Cooper (1988) and Cooper & Hingley (1985), which delved into the early childhood experiences of groups of high-flying professionals. They explained how significant experiences during the early years of a child’s life have deep and lasting effects upon his/her personality development. For instance, Cox & Cooper (1988) discovered that experiencing the loss of a parent, during a child’s formative years, engendered added strengths such as survivability and self-sufficiency, which served them well in their future careers. Therefore, as Thomas (1998) maintains, narratives concerning significant experiences and people in one’s childhood help to give structure and meaning to one’s life.

A common theme of many existing discourses (e.g. White et al, 1992; Cooper & Hingley, 1985) is the effect of deprivation in childhood, particularly separation from one or both parents. The male high-flyers in Cox & Cooper’s (1988) study believed that traumas of orphanic existence, through death of parent(s) or being sent to boarding school at an early age, were to be significant to their future orientations. These experiences could be seen as generating a general sense of independence and self-sufficiency. The connection between early trauma and future success can be explained by Cooper & Hingley’s (1985, p.24) reasoning:

“...as the physical wound produces a healthy scar tissue often stronger than normal to protect the damaged area, so the personality may protect itself by defending vulnerable aspects of the psyche in similar ways”.

Several of the successful professionals interviewed by Cooper & Hingley (1985) reported feelings of strength through adversity. This illustrates the assumptions, postulated by several writers, that the overcoming of early adversity contributes to later success. For example, Tony Blair, Britain's most recent Prime Minister experienced an early sense of insecurity, at the age of ten, when his father became very ill. Similarly, Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, believes that most entrepreneurs have understood a sense of loss. She claims:

"They've been pushed out of childhood, and rather than entering adulthood, they become providers."

(in Lewis, 1998, *Reflections of Success*, p835)

In an interview with Martyn Lewis (1998), Roddick identified two childhood experiences considered to be influential to her present achievement motivation. One was the death of her father; the second was the prejudice that she encountered, from mainstream society, during her immigrant upbringing, instilling her with the notion that outsiders have to try harder than people who are part of the mainstream.

4.1.5 Childhood Experiences of Disabled People

David Blunkett, Home Secretary, believes childhood trauma can either drive you forward or pull you under. It drove him forward as he explains:

"I had to go to boarding school when I was four...because that was the way in which schooling for blind children was organised, on a residential basis. There was the trauma of finding yourself in a dormitory with other children for the first time...I had to deal with my dad's death when I was 12."

(in Lewis, 1998, *Reflections of Success*,p130)

Residential segregated education was not uncommon for disabled children prior to the emergence of the disabled people's movement. According to Saunders (1994) and

Abbot et al (2001), parents believed that a residential school setting was an optimum learning environment for their disabled children. It was thought that residential placements also offered disabled children emotional and social support, which local schools fail to do (Abbot et al, 2001). However, the negative effects of uprooting a child have been documented by many, including Shakespeare & Watson (1998) who argue that segregated education may result in isolation, as it may mean losing regular contact with non-disabled peers and family, because it involves attending a school well outside the local community.

Feelings of isolation among disabled children may also be caused by regular time out for medical or therapeutic interventions (Shakespeare & Watson, 1998). Thomas (1998), who investigated the childhood experiences of 68 disabled women, found that long periods of hospitalisation, at a time when parents were kept out of the wards except for brief visits, left some women with lasting fears of separation and a strong sense of insecurity. An early account of disabled children by David Thomas (1978) focuses on the problem of their isolation. He maintains that the cultural experiences of disabled children differ from those of others in their age group because of prolonged periods of hospitalisation, separate forms of schooling, institutionalisation, restriction of mobility and over-protection.

Moreover the regulatory structure of the residential institutions can either be beneficial or detrimental to the disabled child's self-concept. Barnes (1991) argues that segregated schools are a fundamental part of the discrimination process. He believes that not only do they create and perpetuate artificial barriers between disabled children and their non-disabled peers, but they also serve to reinforce the

traditional medical model of disability, and generally fail to provide the children with the necessary skills to lead an autonomous lifestyle in adulthood.

History reveals that childhood experiences resulting from impairment engender certain personality traits that may have a significant impact on one's adult life. William Hay, born in 1754, describes himself as "*bent in my mother's womb*" (cited in Barnes 1991, p.14). He believed that the socio-psychological difficulties he experienced because of his impairment had caused him to be bashful, uneasy and unsure of himself. However such experiences can also induce perseverance, stubbornness and problem-solving skills that will be valuable for future career orientations. This supports what has been discussed previously in this chapter about childhood trauma inducing strength and other survival skills, and its importance for successful adulthood.

4.1.6 Conclusion of Childhood

Although the discussion in the preceding review demonstrates that early childhood socialisation does have a significant influence on the transition to adult success, it must be remembered that family and childhood experiences alone do not determine individual vocational development. Astin (1984) points out that if socialisation alone determined work expectations then there would be little change; once set, expectations would remain stable.

It can be seen, however, that early childhood does have an influence on later attitudes and behaviours. Indeed, as John Milton suggested:

'The childhood shows the man as the morning shows the day'

(cited in Cooper & Hingley, 1985, p.4)

Even if parents do not directly predetermine their child's future achievement orientation, their support and encouragement can cultivate their child's potential, promoting achievement striving and independence (Stein and Bailey, 1973). This is particularly important for disabled children who are given extremely low expectations by mainstream society. Given the low and negative expectations society holds of disabled people, it is important for them to be supported and encouraged during childhood, to do things that exceed these expectations and thus change attitudes towards disabled children. This thesis intends to discover how the childhood of the 31 disabled high-flyers influenced their achievements in adulthood, and examines if Stein and Bailey's argument about a child's potential being cultivated by a supportive environment still stands for disabled children.

For the disabled child, parents can also act to create social exclusion on a number of practical and emotional levels (Thomas, 1998). The trauma caused by people and situations in childhood might be seen, by psychologists, as literally 'wounding' to the developing personality. Yet, evidence shows that individuals' experiences of early adversity can also propagate general feelings of strength, self-sufficiency and independence which can serve them well in future career orientations.

4.2: Education

Introduction

According to much sociological theory (e.g. Giddens, 1997), education is an essential agent of socialisation, which is required for a society to survive. By bringing generations of young people up to accept dominant norms and values, education plays an important role in the maintenance of social conformity, both in formal and also less obvious ways. Minuchin and Shapiro (1983) argue that it is the school that provides the child with their first social arena within which they are taught to realise the consequences of social and academic competence, competition and power development. While in educational institutions, students experience several ecological transitions which entail progressive, or more drastic movements into more complex contexts. The mastery of these transitions will invariably have a positive impact on the student's move from school to work in the future.

The education system is also responsible for the teaching of social rules in terms of the most acceptable patterns of behaviour for different relationships and between different people. The hierarchical structure of educational institutions is coupled with the assumption that power is concentrated in the hands of a minority (O'Donnell, 1981), and thus children grow and develop with the belief that they should accept certain rules and conditions as inevitable. They are nurtured to regard certain people with varying degrees of respect and tolerance, and are equipped with the knowledge that some people, such as headmasters, can command more respect, politeness and obedience than others. The power that education has over the individual is reflected in

the stratification system of society as a whole since it has become the basis for the distribution of individuals within the total social system.

4.2.1 Education and Economic Participation

No sophisticated theory of education can ignore its contribution to economic development (Bowls & Gintis, 1976, Tomlinson, 1995). Indeed, throughout the Twentieth Century the relationship between education and the economy has constantly assumed greater significance. As suggested by the Warnock Report (1978), education prepares individuals to become economically participative members of society by teaching them the formal and informal skills necessary to pursue a valuable position in the labour force. The attraction is that investments in education are viewed as profitable for both the individual and society (Marginson, 1993). Furthermore, Brown and Lauder (1996) argue that the quality of the nation's education and training system holds the key to future economic prosperity. So, as Tomlinson (1995) suggests, the major goal of schools is to produce students who have demonstrably collected a large number of qualifications, skills and competences as a passport to their possible future.

The allocation of occupational status has been shown to be strongly correlated with education. Hall (1969) contends that particular amounts and, in many cases, particular kinds of education are prerequisites for entrance into the occupational system. Burton R Clark argues that men become part of the potential labour force by qualifying for the work required, and increasingly, capability is defined by formal schooling. He believes that while advanced education offers competence, little schooling defines occupational incompetence, and thus occupational achievement is prefigured by

education. Therefore the education system can be seen as a major factor in placement of people within the whole social system.

The nature of the relationship between the educational and occupational systems is one of mutual dependence. The occupational system essentially relies upon the educational system for its supply of personnel, while the output of the educational system is consumed by the occupational system. Furthermore, education has presented itself to be a prerequisite for upward mobility. For instance, two thirds of the managers in (Davidson, 1997) study had gained degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level. A similar point was also evidenced in the Wall Street Journal (1987) which reported high levels of education among American managers. The statistics show that six per cent had graduated from high school, forty per cent were university graduates, thirty five per cent had qualified with masters degrees and thirteen per cent had doctorates.

However, exceptional educational achievements do not guarantee exceptional working conditions. Recent evidence headlined 'No job security for academics' (Guardian, 9 December 1999), warned that the reality is that individuals with vocations such as professors, lecturers and researchers are victims of "miserable exploitation". According to research which analysed the working conditions of 200 sections of the workforce, nearly a quarter of those in university posts had only "temporary" employment, on short term or fixed term contracts, for example.

4.2.1.1 Education and Economic Participation for Disabled Individuals

According to the Fish Report (*Educational Opportunities for All*; ILEA; 1985) the aims of education for all children and young people include achievement of personal goals and the learning of the skills required to be autonomous in their lifestyle while successfully contributing to the developing economy. Although in an egalitarian society such goals may have been possible, in present day society the optimism which underlies the philosophy of education is somewhat frayed by the lack of facilities available to society's culturally diverse population, thus having a detrimental influence on educational attainment and future career advancement.

Disabled children have not been given the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers (Barnes, 1991). It is apparent that whether or not children with physical impairments attend segregated or integrated education they are less likely to attain the same academic qualifications as their non-disabled peers. This view is supported by official statistics available from the Department for Education and Employment (1982), and a study by Walker (1982). Moreover, as a group, disabled children are not viewed as future economically-contributing citizens, and expectations about them progressing up career ladders beyond achieving non-dependent status are rare (Middleton, 1999). As disabled children often require additional facilities and support to function successfully, they are considered to be disruptive and difficult to educate. Furthermore, their presence is perceived as harmful to the educational progression of non-disabled students. So, instead of being subject to normal educational expectations, the disabled child will often be placed in a segregated institution, conceived as a helpful variant to mainstream schooling, and cajoled to achieve - in terms of eradicating their impairment as the price for acceptance.

Tomlinson (1982) argued that the aim of special education was to enable disabled children to fit unobtrusively into adult society, not to facilitate them to achieve academically or secure employment. In this sense independence implies no more than achieving an economic balance with society, not making a contribution to it, and therefore can be defined as low level ambition.

However, despite this institutional discrimination against disabled people in education, whether integrated or segregated, there are many disabled adults, such as David Blunkett and Stephen Hawking, who have broken through the barriers, and whose occupational success has been significantly facilitated by education. This qualitative study intends to look at the lives of 31 disabled high-flyers to identify how, and the extent to which, their education influenced and determined their success. It also strives to recognise how these disabled people broke through the barriers of discrimination to achieve their success in education and other aspects of life.

4.2.2 Segregated Education

Prior to the introduction of segregated education, children with physical and learning difficulties often found themselves at the lower end of the elementary school structure due to lack of facilities and awareness of support requirements, which prevented them from achieving and demonstrating their full potential.

As a result of the 1944 Education Act most Local Education Authorities adopted a method of academic selection as a way of deciding secondary school placement. Selection at the age of eleven, at the transition from primary to secondary school, was presumed to be able to separate the able from the less able. However, to ensure that the system would work, it was considered essential to weed out as many children as

possible who were considered an inconvenience or a threat to its successful implementation; selection by ability sanctioned selection by disability. Furthermore, as the national curriculum was designed for the majority, children with disabilities who required different or extra facilities and support were placed at a great disadvantage as their individual needs could not be met in a mainstream environment. Hence, Local Education Authorities were instructed to make separate provisions for children with an impairment of the 'body or mind' (Barnes, 1991), a haven for general education's cast-offs (Kauffman, 1999). This instigated the establishment of segregated education, initially set up by charitable organisations to serve individual differences in learning styles and capacity, which were less understood than they are today.

In the United Kingdom, special schools were the most common form of provision, with 58 per cent of students with disabilities in England attending special schools (Norwich, 1994b). By 1971, there were 1019 special schools in England and Wales (Jowett, Hegarty, Moses; 1988) and 482 new ones opened during 1971-72 (DES).

Even with the world-wide trend towards integration and the increasing participation of disabled children into mainstream schools, it has been recognised that for some, segregated education is still the best option. For example, students who require more of their teacher's time and attention to ensure academic achievement are at more of an advantage in special education. However, others need to be put in situations in which they have opportunities to succeed and develop self-esteem and confidence.

4.2.2.1 Advantages of Segregated Education

There has been much debate over recent years concerning the so-called provision of segregated/special education for individuals with disabilities. Underlying the debate are two clear ideological views. One takes an altruistic perspective, implying that there are several advantages of segregated education, related not only to practical and economic factors, but also to the perceived effects on both students with disabilities and non-disabled students of an integrated education (Jenkinson, 1997). Further, Middleton (1999) argues that special education is marketed to parents as a safe option for their disabled child, who would otherwise be vulnerable in the 'hurley-burley' of mainstream education. Similarly Barnes (1991) asserts that one of the principal functions of segregated education is to protect disabled children from the "rough and tumble" of the 'normal' environment. As one parent expresses:

"my child has high needs and is vulnerable to other children. He would be unable to function in mainstream education. It would not be a positive experience for my child or for other children. The special school is the only appropriate situation for him."

(cited in Jenkinson, 1997; *Mainstream or Special*, p92)

It was assumed that economies in the provision of special instructional methods, aids and equipment could be more easily achieved if students with a specific disability such as hearing impairment or physical disability were congregated in a limited number of settings rather than dispersed over many schools. Similarly, Jenkinson (1997) maintains that specialist teachers could be concentrated in a single school, enhancing the development of professional expertise in a specialised area.

A further economy is achieved by centralising ancillary services such as speech therapy, physiotherapy and specialist teaching to one location rather than being dispersed over schools in a wide area, or requiring the student's withdrawal from classes to attend a specialist centre. Moreover, paramedical staff can work in close collaboration with an educational team in a special school. Multi-professional perspectives or the combination of differential expertise can serve to energise viable options and alternative solution strategies perceived to be beneficial to an individual's educational programme. Pearse (1996) postulates that the existence of a multi-professional team under one roof ensures consistency, and quick adaptation and response to ongoing and changing needs. For instance, while therapists possess the talent and capability to teach students how they can perform certain skills to the best of their individual ability, teachers contribute to the knowledge concerning the functional use of these skills in selected activities (Campbell, 1987).

Segregated education is claimed to be advantageous to children with disabilities, as the classes are usually small, with high teacher-student ratios thus enabling one-to-one attention and instruction, which can be pitched at a level appropriate to each child's needs rather than at the traditional age-grade level that caters for the majority of students. Jenkinson (1997) believes that without intensive one-to-one attention, academic learning for students with disabilities may be severely limited. The segregated school is perceived as more supportive, both physically and socially, and less threatening to students with disabilities than the mainstream school. Segregation is thought to encourage the students' feeling of security, and enhance their self-esteem by avoiding continual comparison of their achievements with other, more competent, students. Further, segregated schools enable disabled students to be supported by a

peer group with who share similar needs. According to Pearse (1996), segregated institutions are an integral ingredient to the social and psychological independence of disabled children. Moreover, being nurtured in an environment free from the intervention of mainstream barriers permits the children to explore and develop a sense of self. In their recent study, "Life As A Disabled Child", Priestley et al (1999) discovered that there was much more autonomy in a segregated setting than in a mainstream setting. This was due to children of special schools having the freedom to associate with others in child-defined spaces, albeit within the usual parameters of the school environment.

Disabled students are considered to build positive social relationships more easily in segregated establishments where they, not only share common goals and interests, but values, aspirations and ways of conceptualising the world (Jenkinson, 1997). In mainstream school, where a disabled child requires support, Priestley (1998) postulates that successful social integration with peers may be impeded. For example, Frost (1975) reviews early attempts at integrated secondary education and notes the constraining influence of adult support for children in the classroom. The physical proximity of the helper, Frost argues, can work against social processes of acceptance among other children in the class. On a consistent train of thought, Allan (1996) suggests that all aspects of the child's interpersonal relationships can be brought under the vigilance of the staff, as disabled children are more comprehensively observed than their non-disabled peers:

"All children are the object of scrutiny within schools, but for pupils with special educational needs, the gaze reaches further. They are observed, not only at work in the classroom, but also at break times. The way in which they interact with

mainstream peers or integrate socially is often viewed as equally important, if not more so, than their attainment in mainstream curriculum goals.”

(Allan, 1996, p.222)

4.2.2.2 Criticisms of Segregated Education

Alderson & Goodey (1998) argue that reports suggesting that students have higher self-esteem or do better at special schools are meaningless if self-esteem depends on being in an unreal, protected world, or if the school is unable to cultivate their full potential and facilitate their achievement progression. Therefore, they argue, many special school students will continue, as adults, to be unable to live the full life envisaged by the United Nations Convention (1989) which saw all children as contributing citizens, and affirms faith in the dignity and worth of the human person.

Similarly, Barnes (1991) admits that being in a protective, segregated environment until one's late teens (as has been the norm for many disabled children), and being denied the experiences considered essential for the transition from childhood to adulthood, shields disabled individuals from the realities of society. This will only serve to reinforce the commonly held conception that individuals with impairments are eternal children. Dr John Mary and the British Council Of Disabled People (1986) believe the special education system is one of the main channels for disseminating able-bodied minded perceptions of the world and ensuring that disabled school leavers are socially isolated. This isolation results in disabled people passively accepting social discrimination, lacking the skills necessary to successfully pursue the tasks of adulthood, and not understanding about the main social issues of our time. Therefore, the BCODP (1986) argue that as well as reinforcing the myth that disabled

people are 'eternal children', segregated education ensures disabled school leavers lack the skills for overcoming the myth. This is supported by Jenkinson (1997) who believes that the lack of appropriate behavioural role models, the lack of feedback from non-disabled peers, and the removal from the common culture of childhood and adolescence contribute to later isolation in the community.

So by producing socially and educationally disabled individuals, the special education system perpetuates and legitimatises discrimination practices in all other areas of social life, particularly employment (Barnes, 1991). This is consistent with Dunn (1968), who asserts that it is the actual segregated placement itself which is responsible for individuals with disabilities being labelled with negative terminology and excluded from mainstream society. He contends that diagnostic procedures based on the administration of standardised tests tend to categorise the student under a particular label, with damaging effects both on teacher expectations and the student's own self-concept.

A further major criticism of segregated education is that in developing an isolated curriculum which focuses disproportionately on specific educational needs, it prevents students from learning a wide range of subjects offered in mainstream schools and perceived to be important to successful economic participation. Furthermore, evidence reported by the DES (1986; 1989a; 1989b) offered the opinion that the small number of staff in special schools, coupled with their significantly limited, if not deficient, curricula expertise, undeniably serves to restrict the range and content of the curriculum. Another cause for concern, expressed by Jenkinson (1997), is the lack of training and experience of most special

school teachers in the secondary curriculum, which is anticipated to be an increasing handicap as students with disabilities move into adolescence.

An article entitled 'Special School Shame' (Disability Now, Jan 1997) reported on a study, conducted by the Alliance for Inclusive Education, which evidenced that special schools are less likely to enter their students for public examinations. According to the sample statistics, only six of the eighty five special schools in the study (7%) proceeded to compete in nationally recognised exams. The general line of reasoning was based on the assumption that children in special schools were unable to learn as well as their peers in regular education. As GCSE qualifications are the benchmark of ability to enter further education, the evidence proposes special schools to be a barrier to equality as they persist with their unjustified presumption, and fail to permit their students to follow an educational path parallel to their non-disabled counterparts. In a HMI report entitled 'The Effectiveness of Small Special Schools', the low academic rate in special school was recognised to be the consequence of a severe lack of resources, and not students lack of ability.

4.2.3 Integrated Education

The International Year of Disabled People in 1981 influenced the community to think more deeply about the way in which services should be provided to people with disabilities. The United Nations Declaration made during that year included the right to receive an education that would facilitate students with disabilities fully to develop their academic and social potential. As Barnes (1991) has argued, integration plays an imperative role in the fight towards the elimination of discrimination and of disabled people being accepted as citizens of the social

majority. Furthermore, as reported in an OECD/CERI (1981) publication, being educated in mainstream institutions is positively correlated with the successful transition of individuals with disabilities into employment and wider society.

However, being placed in mainstream school does not necessarily equate to experiencing total integration. Attitudes of mainstream teachers have been evidenced as a barrier. For example, the experience of a ten year old boy with a disability in mainstream schools) illustrates the deficits of mainstream education:

“The attitude of the teachers, and especially the principal, to all students was extremely poor. To children with disabilities it was even worse. They really had no interest in Ben’s progress. He wasn’t challenged either in the curriculum, or in developing physical skills.”

(cited in Jenkinson, 1997, p28-29)

Discriminatory attitudes among teaching staff in the mainstream sector have also been confirmed by HMI reports. For example, a DES survey, published in 1989, noted that the attitudes of some staff were said to be ‘patronising’, while others were reluctant to work with disabled pupils. These attitudes, it was found, were likely to be reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of non-disabled students towards their disabled peers. The effects of such attitudinal discrimination amongst peers may be fatal. As Haring (1991) argues, peer acceptance is a primary outcome of schooling, with important consequences for the quality of life of students with disabilities. Existing discourse reveals low childhood peer acceptance induces loneliness, truancy, psychopathology and suicide (Parker & Asher, 1987), as it deprives children of opportunities to learn normal, adaptive modes of social conduct and social cognition as well as undermining their academic progress. Thus, Saborine

(1985) proposes the educational philosophy of developing the “whole child”, and the egalitarian intent of recent special education legislation appears to entail an emphasis on the social outcomes of students with disabilities.

Thus, the ultimate goal of education is not only to mould the student into a ‘responsible contributor’ to society, as maintained by proponents of inclusive education (e.g. Giddens, 1997), but should also be to encourage conversation and social interaction between disabled and non-disabled peers in a co-operative group situation. Without positive social learning experiences and opportunities to fully develop their self-concept, children with disabilities will neither be prepared, as adults, to play a valuable role in the economic life of society, or have the ability to perform essential tasks required to live an independent and dignified lifestyle.

The deficiencies of segregated and integrated education can be eliminated and their benefits combined, as evidenced in Victoria, Canada, where the curriculum is organised into eight key learning areas, and all students are required to participate in these areas. A flexible interpretation of content ensures that a wide range of functional skills may be included, such as health and physical education (which includes hydrotherapy and physiotherapy), road safety, sex education and personal hygiene, together with leisure activities such as camps and riding for the disabled. Mathematics may include skills with money and time. Work experience and legal rights may be taught as an integral part of the studies of society and environment. English may incorporate argumentative communication or receptive language skills. Similarly, other key areas include activities that are appropriate at all levels of ability.

The advantage of such a framework is that it ensures that students with and without disabilities can work alongside each other on a broad and comprehensive curriculum. Even where students have to attend special classes at irregular intervals during school hours, these should be located centrally so that students have the opportunity to interact within the school building, rather than being in an isolated part of the school (Sailor, 1989). Furthermore according to Sailor's identified requirements for successful inclusion, the school should be close enough to the student's home so that excessive time is not spent on travel, a major criticism of segregated schooling.

4.2.4 Conclusion of Education

It is widely recognised that the primary function of education is to ingrain individuals with the skills and abilities, both social and academic, deemed appropriate for them to serve a purposeful role in society's developing economy and live an autonomous lifestyle. Unfortunately, although significant progress has been made in the education of disabled individuals over the past twenty years, there are still many issues to be resolved. For example, integration of disabled students into mainstream schools may indeed mean access to a broader curriculum, and consequently increased career opportunities, but it could also breed social rejection and exclusion due to the lack of common traits between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Furthermore, evidence suggests that even now most mainstream schools are not fully physically accessible (Barnes, 1991; Jenkinson, 1997). Such discrimination, either physically or attitudinally, can be seriously damaging to the individual's self-confidence and esteem. The segregated school

setting is regarded, by all parents, as a 'safe' and preferable option for their disabled children. Furthermore it is considered financially viable for the pooling of specialised resources and equipment. However, Barnes (1991) points out that the segregated school can be seen as an artificial environment which may contribute to the isolation of people with disabilities in adult life as it shelters them from the expected culture of the majority.

Therefore, an alternative system is called for which facilitates disabled students to develop socially and cognitively at the rate of their non-disabled peers. Jenkinson (1997) contends that such goals are offered by the link school concept and partial integration that involves a working relationship between a special school and a mainstream school. The establishment of link schools was strongly encouraged by Warnock (1978) as a prelude to integration on a larger scale, and has been a significant development in the provision of special education in the United Kingdom (Hegarty, 1988). The link school concept encourages, and provides a setting for, social interaction between students with disabilities and students in the mainstream. Furthermore, it serves as a gradual transition process for students moving from special school to mainstream school.

Partial integration is increasingly perceived as combining the 'best of both worlds' (Jenkinson, 1997). It permits the disabled student to have access to a special curriculum and small classes in a special school, while also having the opportunity to socialise and participate with non-disabled peers in activities and classes which are not available in the special school. Therefore, those disabled students who are able, are encouraged to pursue subjects not available in the special school's limited

curriculum, and achieve the prerequisites regarded essential for successful vocational participation and career development. However, these students can still retain access to facilities and resources from the special school that may be lacking in the mainstream school.

The idea of partial integration is further discussed in Chapter 6 (section 6.4), through the voices of disabled high-flyers themselves. Chapter 6 (section 6.4) also highlights the disabled high-flyers' views and experiences of different educational settings, i.e. segregated, mainstream or a combination of both. This thesis then aims to use the lived experiences of disabled high-achievers who have 'made it', either via the segregated or integrated education system, to develop new ideas to facilitate inclusive educational practice, educational support, intervention and service provision. As Davis and Watson (2001) argue, if real change is to occur disabled people and their allies must gain a share of power in educational institutions

4.3: Personality & Motivation

Introduction

As Goethe states:

“Behaviour is a mirror in which everyone shows his image”

It is common practice for psychologists and laypersons alike to explain human behaviour with reference to a stable profile of underlying personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1994b; Goldberg, 1990). Traits, according to Dweck (1999), are one way to describe people's behaviour. As Ajzen (1988) postulates, when people are caught lying or cheating they are considered dishonest, when they perform poorly they are said to lack ability or motivation, when they help a person in need they are called altruistic and compassionate, and when they discriminate against members of a minority group they are termed prejudiced. However, as personality traits are latent hypothetical characteristics they fail to explain human behaviour that can only be inferred from external observable cues. For example, the fact that an individual approves or disapproves of abortion, or likes or dislikes the Prime Minister can become known from their covert or overt responses to themselves or others.

Personality is viewed as having a dual impact, both on occupational and on life success. Hendey (1999) argues that if a person starts off on the right path, achievement is likely which, in turn, leads to an increase in self-confidence and the attainment of further knowledge and skills which hold the key to success.

Personality traits have multiple implications for individuals' lives in that they have an influence on people's occupational choice, and on whether they achieve success

or failure in their job (Bee, 1996). Research has indicated that certain traits are typical of certain kinds of people. For instance, evidence concerning career success and high-flyers (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; White et al, 1992) showed that high-achieving individuals scored higher than average on intelligence, assertiveness, emotional stability and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Cox & Cooper (1988), the high-flyers, in their study, tended to have high levels of determination, indicated by their ability to set very clear objectives, for themselves and organisations, and to follow through to see them achieved. This is not a recent finding, having been expressed in much earlier literature. For example, in 1926, Cox found that the two most important characteristics of high-flyers, including great leaders, intellectuals and artists, were their persistence and drive. In yet another early investigation, Tead, in his 1935 book, *"The Art of Leadership"*, reported that the traits of the effective leader were:

"...nervousness and physical energy, a sense of purpose and direction, enthusiasm, friendliness, integrity, technical mastery, decisiveness, intelligence, teaching skills and faith."

(cited in Cooper & Hingley, 1985, p.118)

More recent writings from Stogdill (1974), the American psychologist and author of *"Handbook of Leadership"*, suggest that the effective leader can be seen as exhibiting a persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness, originality in problem solving and a drive to exercise initiative in social situations. Similarly, Close (1983), in his article 'Dogmatism and managerial achievement', reveals that successful managers demonstrate greater intelligence, have higher aspirations and more desire for responsibility than both the general population and less successful managers. Further, he found top managers to be more dogmatic than their junior

contemporaries. Spillane (1985), in *"Achieving Peak Performance"*, suggests that effective managers show decisiveness, self-assurance, intelligence, independence and risk-taking. Upon investigating the reasons for success of the executives in their study, McCall and Lombardo (1983) noted they were outgoing, well liked, charming and technically brilliant.

The high-flyers in Cox & Cooper's (1988) study evidenced a very high internal Locus of Control. This means that they worked from internal reference points and their actions were mainly influenced by their own internal beliefs and values, not by external factors such as luck, fate or significant others. Similarly, the successful women in White et al's study demonstrated a belief that their success was a product of their own hard work, perseverance and drive to achieve, thus maintaining an internal Locus of Control and a high need for achievement, which, they argue, are prime precursors of success.

In view of the likelihood that disabled high-flyers also show similar traits to their non-disabled counterparts, as mentioned above, this section attempts to explore the extent to which three major areas of personality and motivation contribute to the career success of disabled adults. The three areas conceived to be significant by existing research findings (e.g. White et al, 1992; Cox & Cooper) and my own hypothesis, are as follows:

1. *Locus of Control*: This area is concerned with the individual's perception of who controls the rewards he/she receives; essentially whether the rewards are believed to be contingent upon an individual's own behaviour or controlled by forces outside themselves. This focus is also concerned with the familial origins

of locus of control, that is, the differential child-rearing practices that engender internal or external locus of control, particularly in disabled children. This is followed by a discussion, heavily influenced by Heider's (1958) attribution theory, looking at the four causal attributions of success and failure.

2. *Need for Achievement*: Since the respondents in the study had all achieved a high occupational status, it seems appropriate to explore achievement motivation and its driving mechanisms. The degree of difficulty of tasks the individual feels capable of attempting, and how long behaviour is sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences shall be examined.
3. *Work Centrality*: This is concerned with the degree of importance work has in an individual's life. Work centrality is measured by hours worked, involvement and commitment, and the extent to which work is part of the individuals' identity.

4.3.1 Locus of Control

An event regarded by some persons as a reward or reinforcement may be differently perceived and reacted to by others. Rotter's (1966) thesis suggests that one of the determinants of this reaction is the degree to which the individual perceives that the reward follows from, or is contingent upon, his own behaviour or attributes, versus the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by extrinsic factors. Those who believe that they exercise some kind of control over their destiny are described as having an internal locus of control. Conversely, when a reinforcement is perceived by an individual as the result of luck, fate, chance or under the control of significant others, they are said to have an external locus of control.

Individual differences in the tendency to perceive events as internally or externally controlled can be represented as a continuum known as the internal-external control scale (I-E scale). This scale was deemed most suitable because, as Rotter (1966) argues, behaviour in complex situations is usually not a matter of making absolute judgements such as 'I agree' or 'I disagree', but a relative matter of deciding on something as a preference to the alternative. People's position on the I-E scale will determine the extent to which they perceive success or failure as being contingent upon their own behaviour.

4.3.1.1 Locus of Control & Career Success

Andrisani and Nestel (1976) contend that the psychological construct, locus of control, has received much attention in connection with research on employment success. Upon an examination of the literature, they identified strong evidence to suggest that an internal locus of control reflects a propensity to influence one's environment, which they believe is a mark of initiative and confidence. Weiner's (1972) theory is concerned with the relationship between I-E scores and achievement striving. He believes that individuals who perceive that outcomes are under personal control may be expected to engage in more achievement-related activities than individuals who believe that outcomes are a consequence of external factors.

Andrisani and Nestel (1976) and Garfield (1986) argue that successful individuals have a primarily internal locus of control, thus holding the belief that success results from hard work and that failure is the individual's responsibility. For instance, Garfield (1986) postulates that such people have a self-confidence which generates

an internal authority to act, based on their own expertise and knowledge that if something goes awry they will know what to do. Internals (i.e. individuals with an internal locus of control) count on their capabilities and trust their own effectiveness.

Lefcourt (1982) suggests that locus of control plays a mediating role in determining whether a person becomes involved in the pursuit of an achievement. For example, Gurin et al (1969) find that internality in the personal sense predicts school grades, educational aspiration and confidence in school. Moreover, as de Charms (1984) asserts, individuals with an internal locus of control have a strong feeling of personal causation and are likely to attribute changes in the environment to personal behaviour. This is a powerful motivational force directing future behaviour. As Lefcourt argued, the process of planning and working for deferred gratification would seem tolerable if the individual believed that they had the ability to determine the results of their efforts. It can be argued that the feeling of personal causation is crucial for individuals who are preoccupied with achieving large successes which, although offering much larger extrinsic rewards in the long-term, operate in a delayed-incentive system involving a long period of deprivation with only small extrinsic rewards. These individuals are referred to as intrinsically motivated individuals as they seek to maximise their satisfaction through behaviours that serve to enhance feelings of competence and self-determination. Such behaviours include seeking responsibility, excitement, learning and challenge derived from the task itself.

However, when individuals do not possess such a feeling of personal causation, they are more likely to let themselves be influenced by external factors (de Charms, 1984) and find the path from the initiation to the completion of their plans fraught with unpredictability and uncertainty (White et al, 1992). They are, therefore, more likely to opt for the certainty of immediate gratification, and less likely to engage in activities which lead to feelings of competence and self-determination. This logic is consistent with the tenets of expectancy-valence theory advanced by Porter and Lawler (1968), which states that the expectancy that effort will lead to success is crucial in generating motivation to work. Lewin (1951) comments that success generates success in that a person is more likely to set a new higher level aspiration following a successfully attained goal. In addition, as Bandura (1982) states, repeated success and failure avoidance is the most powerful means of creating a strong, resilient sense of self-efficacy which, he postulates, will reduce the negative impact of occasional failure.

Although there is limited evidence to suggest that locus of control has a significant influence on success at work, a body of existing research supports the thesis that an internal locus of control is a precursor of success. Andrisani and Nestel (1976) discovered, in their large-scale longitudinal study, that, over a two year period, internals achieved a more pronounced advancement in their annual earnings and job satisfaction than their counterparts who demonstrated an external locus of control. They prepared a further report, based on cross-sectional data, which suggested that internals are more likely to occupy high-status professions, earn more money and tend to experience greater levels of satisfaction with their work than externals. Similarly, Waddel's (1983) comparative study of a group of female entrepreneurs

and a group of female managers and secretaries evidenced that the women in higher-status occupations i.e. the entrepreneurs, tended to have an internal locus of control. The positive correlation between internal locus of control and occupational success was also supported by White et al (1992) who found that a significant proportion of successful women in their sample had a personal sense of internality. They attributed their success to hard work and good performance, as opposed to chance factors such as luck or fate.

4.3.1.2 Attributions of Success and Failure

In accordance with attribution theory (Heider, 1958) there are many possible reasons why a particular success or failure might occur, and therefore there are many causal attributions which can be made. Although the causes of success and failure may be assigned to many different sources, it is postulated that four frequently cited causal elements generalise to all achievement outcomes: ability, effort, luck and task difficulty (Weiner et al, 1971). These four causal elements differ from one another along two dimensions as shown in table 4.3.1: locus of control (internal or external) and stability (fixed or variable). Along the locus of control dimension, the first two attributes, ability and effort, are causes originating within, or internal to the individual. Weiner et al (1971) classifies them as internal determinants of action, and Heider (1958) refers to them as 'personal forces'. However, the remaining causal elements, namely task difficulty and luck, are classified as external determinants of success and failure, that is, they are causes within the environment and external to the individual.

The second dimension along which ability, effort, luck and task difficulty may be ordered is in their stability. Frieze (1975) contends that although ability and task difficulty may be relatively invariant, effort and luck could be highly changeable. For example exertion may increase or decrease from moment to moment or from one task to another, just as luck may be good at one time and poor at another.

If success at a particular type of activity was due to high ability or simplicity of the activity, one would anticipate continued success at the same task. Similarly if a failure was due to stable causes, continued failure would be anticipated. Conversely, as Frieze (1975) purports, unstable causes lead to expectations of change. So if bad luck was perceived as the primary cause of failure, future success would be anticipated as luck changes. Lack of effort would be variable and therefore seen as less negative than lack of ability.

Table 4.3.1: Classification of attributions of success & failure

<i>STABILITY</i>	<i>LOCUS OF CONTROL</i>	
	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
Stable	Ability	Task Difficulty
Unstable	Effort	Luck

As detailed in Chapter 3, significant evidence (e.g. Kukla, 1972; Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1973) has been uncovered to suggest that high-achievers tend to attribute their success and failure primarily to internal causes. Kukla (1972) demonstrated that highly achievement-motivated men tended to attribute their success both to high

ability and effort, while they perceived their failures as due to lack of effort. The attribution of failure to lack of effort would lead to greater subsequent trying, thus indicating the internality and motivating effects of high-achieving males (Atkinson, 1964; Weiner, 1972). Conversely, it is argued that low achievement-motivated males are less likely to attribute their successes to internal causes, but are more likely to attribute their failure to lack of ability (Weiner & Potepan, 1970). Such patterns suggest that high achievement-motivated individuals believe their own performance behaviour determines achievement outcomes, therefore, feeling compelled to work harder to ensure that these outcomes meet their original aspirations. On the other hand, those who consider luck or significant others to play a prominent part in their life development feel less pride in success and are discouraged by failure.

Previous work has indicated that the concept of expectation has widespread implications for understanding individual differences in achievement-related behaviour. Colwill (1984) asserts that a key variable in explaining one's own success is whether or not one is expected to succeed. For example, when people are randomly assigned to high and low expectancy groups, the high expectancy group tends to perform better than the low expectancy group (Tyler, 1958). Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) demonstrated, by their study, that teacher expectations influenced student performance in a situation where teachers were given randomly assigned high or low status expectations about their students. Furthermore, several studies have verified that individuals who expect to do better on an achievement task actually do perform at a higher level (Battle 1965; Feather 1966).

As mentioned above, an individual's status is somewhat deterministic of the expectations and ideologies of the many agents of socialisation and of the social factors and human interactive human behaviour that influence the structure of society. Numerous studies suggest that women, as with other minority groups including disabled people, are particularly influenced by the perceived acceptance or rejection of others of their achievements (Freeman, 1971; Horner, 1972). As Hendey (1999) postulates, norms prescribe roles for individuals in different situations, and informal as well as legal sanctions may be used to maintain expected behaviour. For example, according to traditional societal norms, women are expected to achieve less than their male counterparts, and similarly, disabled people are expected to adopt a passive, dependent role in society (Hendey, 1999).

When individuals start to deviate from the expected norm, they are likely to become victims of social rejection and discomfort. For example women or disabled people with the reputation of low-achievers, who have achieved a high, prestigious professional status may strike onlookers with a sense of "status incongruency", a conflicting status level noted by Donelson and Gullahorn (1977). Status incongruency tends to make outsiders feel uncomfortable in dealing with people who have achieved or become something that was presumed beyond their ability. This state is likely to induce the employment of some sort of social sanction. Furthermore, Colwill (1984) maintains that the high-achievers themselves may tend to avoid this discomfort-producing situation by not aspiring to careers beyond their expected status level. Horner (1970) contends that even if expected low-achievers (i.e. members some of minority groups) do have an opportunity to become successful, many may avoid it in order to behave in a socially approved manner.

The unexpected success of members of minority groups, such as women or individuals with physical impairments, may cause success to be attributed to unstable factors such as luck (Deaux & Emswiler, 1974) or undue effort (Feldman-Saunders & Kiesler, 1974), which will rarely result in tangible organisational rewards, unlike success which is attributed to more stable factors such as ability. The relationship between expectancy and the stability dimension of the causal attributions was attempted to be verified by Valle and Frieze (1976) who proposed that the causal attribution made is strongly influenced by the extent to which an individual's performance violates the observer's initial expectations. This is exemplified by the increasing professional success of women in economic society, which contradicts general expectations of women being unemployed or concentrated in the secondary labour market (White et al, 1992; Frieze, 1975). The same is true for the disabled minority who, in accordance with societal norms, are expected to be passive and dependent, and unable to make any significant contribution to the economic development of society (Oliver, 1990). Therefore, it can be argued that disabled people occupying high-status professions have deviated from the stereotypical societal norm (of disabled people), so onlookers are more likely to attribute their success to chance factors rather than internal causes. However, as Colwill (1984) warns, for members of these minorities (e.g. women or disabled people), to attribute their own success to luck could have serious consequences. She postulates that individuals who attribute their success to luck will not raise their expectancy of future success, which in expectancy/ valence terms, would leave motivation unchanged. In addition, they would learn nothing about how they achieved success, leaving self-

esteem and self-efficacy beliefs unaltered. The failure to raise self-esteem is likely to inhibit career growth.

So, to sum up, if the individual is expected to perform well and actually does so, the performance will be attributed to internal, stable factors such as ability, and a high level of future performance will be predicted. If expectations are high but performance is low, the failure is attributed to bad luck, lack of effort, or other unstable characteristics, and the expectations of future performance continue to be high. Conversely, if an individual performs well when expectations are low, the observer will tend to judge the outcome as a result of good luck, special effort or other unstable factors which, Frieze (1975) conceives as highly changeable. Valle and Frieze (1976) illustrate this notion in the table below:

Table 4.3.2: Predictions of Success and Failure based upon Prior Expectations

EXPECTATION	PERFORMANCE	ATTRIBUTION	PREDICTION
High	High	Ability	Future success
High	Low	Bad Luck	Future success
Low	High	Good Luck	Future failure
Low	Low	Lack of ability	Future failure

4.3.1.3 Familial origins of locus of control

According to functionalist theorists, e.g. Parsons (1956), and Jones & Wallace (1992), the family is responsible for teaching children to conform to social norms and learn culturally prescribed social and familial roles. However, they point out that for this to be successful, parents must allow children to be temporarily

dependent on them but then, in time, facilitate in liberating the children from that dependency.

Katkovsky et al (1967) believe that it seems likely that an individual's internality or externality could be influenced by particular child rearing patterns. For instance, the more a parent initiates and encourages their child's achievement behaviour and the development of skills, the more the child will learn that it is his/her own behaviour, and not external factors, which will determine the reinforcements he/she receives. Moreover, the extent to which parents are positively or negatively reinforcing also may have a significant bearing on the child's belief in internal versus external control. Katkovsky et al (1967) argue that the more positive parents' reactions are to their child's achievement behaviours, the more the child is likely to develop a belief in internal control of reinforcements; and the more negative the parents' reactions, the more a belief in external control will be fostered. Such a contention was supported by the results of Davis and Phares' (1969) interviews with university students which revealed that extreme internals recalled experiencing significant positive parent-child interaction, less rejection, hostile control, inconsistent discipline and less withdrawal than did extreme externals. This is consistent with Lefcourt's (1982) thesis which suggests that warmth, supportiveness and parental encouragement are essential for the development of an internal locus of control. Marcia (1966) suggests that this pattern of parent-child relationship permits and encourages decision-making about future choices and orientation including occupations, and results in a conferred identity meaning that the individual's identity is a synthesis of childhood experiences.

Nurturance is conceptually and empirically different to protectiveness (MacDonald, 1971) which, if on a random, over-abundant schedule, can lead to feelings of helplessness or a very external locus of control. Devereaux et al (1969) suggest that nurturance is subsumed under supporting, but protectiveness is subsumed under a controlling dimension. Therefore, although a child requires a safe environment with a certain degree of security in order to explore and develop their sense of self as a causative agent, over-protective child-rearing practices may have the effect of suffocating the child's curiosity and intrinsic motivation. This can curb active intercourse with the child's social and physical environment.

Although all children are said to be dependent, as maturity increases for the non-disabled child he/she will strive to become more independent (Sutherland, 1981). However, this is not always achievable for disabled children, who are very often prevented from developing social skills and self-confidence because their lives are controlled by other people (Morris, 1997; Norwich, 1997; Alderson & Goodey, 1998). A significant body of recently published research has pointed out that disabled children are often denied the same rights and choices as other children (Morris, 1997), are under constant surveillance (Allan, 1996) and are cut off from the opportunities to interact in the same way as do non-disabled children. In accordance with Davis et al's (1999) thesis, parents, medical professionals and local authority officials are heavily implicated in this process.

It is not, however, correct to assume that all dependency equates to having an external locus of control. Existing literature fails to clarify that if an individual has difficulty in mobilizing themselves and requests facilitation from someone else, it

does not necessarily mean that they are not in control of what happens to them. It simply means that the employment of a facilitator makes it easier for them to exercise control over their own lives. This research aims to show just this by illustrating how individuals with significant physical impairments, although often requiring the continuous assistance of others, believed that they were in control of their destiny and that their high-achieving status was due to their hard work, ability and perseverance. Thus this study looks at the impact locus of control has on the achievements of disabled high-flyers.

4.3.2 Need for Achievement

Given today's intensely competitive business climate world-wide, it is important to understand how individuals' need for achievement may be acquired and changed, and the extent to which this serves to influence their occupational success or failure. This is not a new concept, as has been evidenced by Vernon (1969) who considered the ways in which people consciously strive to attain some criteria of excellence, discovering that the achievement of such criteria leads to feelings of well-being and great satisfaction. Further it motivated them to strive to the next level of their career. Conversely, in the instance of failure, thereby inducing feelings of frustration and humiliation, an individual is likely to lower their standard of achievement. Raynor (1974) argues that immediate success is known to guarantee the opportunity for subsequent career striving, while immediate failure is known to guarantee future career failure through loss of opportunity to continue in that career path.

The formalization of the achievement-motivation construct is derived primarily from the work of Henry Murray (1938) who was a central influence in achievement motivation research and the development of achievement theory. He based his theory of behaviour on the concept of "need", believing that the environment can

provide the necessary support for the expression of a need, or it can contain barriers that impede goal-directed behaviour. Further, he developed an extensive taxonomy of needs, derived from psychological deficits, which represent enduring personality characteristics. One of these needs was the need for achievement (nAch) which Murray describes as:

“the desire or tendency to do things as rapidly and/or as well as possible. [It also includes the desire] to accomplish something difficult. To master, manipulate and organise physical objects, human beings or ideas. To do this as rapidly, and as independently as possible. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one’s self. To rival and surpass others. To increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent.”

(cited in Weiner, 1972, p172)

McClelland and his associates (1951, 1955) were greatly influenced by the work of Murray (1938) when explaining the different ways that individuals perceive situations and are motivated to strive for a particular success goal. They defined the need for achievement as behaviour directed toward competition with a standard of excellence, where performance in such situations can be evaluated as successful or unsuccessful (McClelland et al., 1953). Their theory characterised high-need achievers by their single-minded preoccupation with task accomplishment, believing this to be essential to entrepreneurial success. Moreover McClelland concluded from his research that the need for achievement is established during childhood and largely influenced by child-rearing practices and other parental influences. His research suggested that children who have been nurtured by parents who have relatively strict expectations about right and wrong behaviour, who provide clear

feedback on the effectiveness of the children's performance and who help their children accept a personal responsibility for their actions, tended to have a fairly high need for achievement.

Achievement behaviour is not just the motivation to achieve. As Atkinson (1964) postulates, it is also the motivation to avoid failure. Together these two motivational tendencies determine whether an individual will ultimately approach or avoid an achievement task. High-need achievers have a tendency to pursue achievement tasks for which there is a reasonable probability of success. According to McClelland (1961) these individuals have a tendency to choose to pursue difficult, challenging tasks that offer opportunities to demonstrate their competence, and will avoid tasks that seem too easy. Individuals with a high need for achievement also tend to fear failure (Atkinson, 1964) and thus avoid tasks conceived as being too difficult. As Farmer (1985) points out, high-need achievers are also characterised by their inclination to persist in the face of adversity, and as Murray (1938) claimed, their desire to excel and surpass others. Such self-motivational drive was rated as strong for 94 percent of the successful women in Boardman et al's (1987) study. Similarly, just under 75% of the women in White et al's (1992) study demonstrated a high need for achievement by expressing a strong need to do a good job and be the best in their field. It is feasible, as argued by Murray (1938), that self-excellence in the work arena may be engendered by the need to expand one's career sub-identity in order to detract from other sub-identities. Hall (1976) suggests that sub-identity growth may be experienced by an individual acquiring competence relevant to their career role, which is comprised of the expectancies people hold for individuals in that career. Sub-identities may include gender, race, religious orientation or

disability. The use of work to counteract disability prejudice has been argued by Sutherland (1981), who believes that if people occupy a status that is socially prestigious and economically rewarding and possess a university degree, they have a stronger possibility of counteracting prejudice stemming from their disability. The concept of diagnostic overshadowing has been used in writings by Hahn(1988) to describe when an individual is being characterised by their disability as opposed to their abilities, or, as Wright (1960) argued, when the disability is perceived as the most important attribute of the individual, obscuring all other attributes. However, the acquisition of a respectable high-status position in society's economic structure has been found to dilute any discrimination engendered by disability. As Sutherland (1981) argues, acceptance becomes easier the more one conforms to the norm of the societal majority.

Disability and the behaviours associated with it were indeed identified, by the current study, as a significant motivation to succeed and achieve high-flyer status. This will be examined further in chapter 6.

4.3.3 Work Centrality

High-need achievers, evidence indicates (e.g. MOW Research Team, 1987; Dublin, 1956), tend to expend a significant amount of time and energy in work-related activities, and thus are said to be high in work centrality. This is one of the three primary components of achievement motivation, conceptualised by Farmer (1985), and refers to the extent to which an individual sees involvement in a career as central to his/her adult life. The work of Dublin (1956) and Barker (1968) proposes a decision orientation component of work centrality which begins with the premise

that an individual's life experiences are segmented into different sub-spheres, and that people differ in their preferences for particular life spheres. Therefore when the work sphere occupies a central or most preferred position in an individual's life, they are said to be high in career centrality.

A further indication of the degree of individual career centrality is involvement or commitment. Involvement includes behavioural elements such as the amount of time spent participating in work activities. The MOW Research Team (1987) contends that the time one spends in training or preparation for work is indicative of how fundamental work is to their life. Furthermore, as Judge et al (1995) suggest, working overtime, evenings or weekends is a fair indicator of high work centrality. The high-flyers in Cox & Cooper's (1988) study were evidenced as being significantly involved and dedicated to their work. The majority of the sample worked above and beyond the statutory 37 hour working week. They often took work home at weekends and/or evenings. Individuals are also more inclined to become significantly devoted to their job if they believe in its worth, and thus get a sense of moral purpose. As Vroom (1964) postulates, many work roles provide their occupants with an opportunity to contribute to the happiness and well being of their fellow men.

Substantial commitment to work is also indicative of high career centrality. This, as was put forward by the MOW Research Project (1987), is partially free of short-run experiences, thus being more concerned with future orientations and meeting long-term goals. This is consistent with the work of Dublin et al (1976) who found that workers with high levels of work centrality particularly valued the chances for

advancement and promotion. Furthermore his research showed such workers to particularly value job responsibility, only successfully achievable with sufficient involvement and commitment.

In recent years the act of working has been seen as vital, not only for financial survival, but also as a means of attaining personal satisfaction and earning a respectable position in society. As Miller and Form (1951, p.115) postulate:

“The motives for working cannot be assigned only to economic needs, for men may continue to work even though they have no need for material goods. Even when their security and that of their children is assured, they continue to labour. Obviously this is so because the rewards they get from work are social, such as respect and admiration from their fellow men... For all, work provides fellowship and social life.”

Furthermore work has been proposed to facilitate the growth of one's psychological well-being which is crucial for a perpetually healthy autonomous lifestyle. Aiken et al (1968) argues that when a person experiences unemployment, career perspectives are destroyed and the various spheres of life become fragmented. Similarly, upon reviewing the thrust of empirical research concerning a large number of cross-sectional longitudinal studies, Warr (1985) concludes that many facets of the psyche, such as self-esteem, anxiety, distress, depression and happiness are impaired by unemployment.

Work has been seen by many as a means of securing a purposeful position in society. Many workers in a study conducted by Morse & Weiss (1955) indicated that working gives them a feeling of being tied into the larger society, of having

something to do and having a purpose in life. Furthermore, it can be argued that one's occupational position serves as a means of identification and will engender certain types of behaviour from fellow citizens. As Friedmann and Havighurst (1954) have discussed, the job is a label which marks the person inside and outside of his paid employment. They maintain that job status is an important determinant to an individual's position in his/her family and community. As Hall (1969) maintains, knowledge of what a person does provides a handy indicator of where the person fits vis á vis oneself. In addition, occupational identification is perceived as a powerful indicator of one's place in the stratification system and provides a strong indication of their educational background and income. So, occupation has been noted to be a primary means of identification, for the self and society, where some behaviours are prescribed rather than voluntarily chosen.

Although, as can be seen above, a significant body of literature exists which demonstrates the positive correlation between high achievers and career centrality, its focus is largely on the non-disabled population. Therefore this thesis strives to fill the gap in the literature and investigate if the same is true for disabled high-flyers. Further this research explores the level of importance work has in the lives of disabled high-flyers. It questions whether they use their work as a means of identification and a way of proving their worth to society. It may be argued that work gives people a sense of purpose, and for disabled people who are stereotyped as passive and dependent, it provides an opportunity to override their disability status. Furthermore by fulfilling a purposeful position in society, disabled people will serve to reduce negative attitudes and discrimination.

This thesis explores the extent to which work is central to the lives of disabled high-flyers and how, through their commitment and involvement with work, they achieve success. It also is concerned with the effect disability has on work centrality, and explores whether high-flyers see their work as a means of reducing diagnostic overshadowing.

4.3.4 Conclusion of Personality & Motivation

It has been argued here that the three constructs of personality: locus of control, need for achievement and work centrality, have an influence on success through their impact on motivational processes. The body of discourse reveals that high-flyers are more likely to have an internal locus of control, attributing success or failure to internal behaviours such as ability and effort rather than factors external to the individual. Such internality is established in childhood and influenced by child-rearing practices where parents have relatively strict expectations about right and wrong behaviour, and teach their children to take personal responsibility for their actions, thus engendering a high need for achievement which entails a single-minded preoccupation with task accomplishment. Moreover, this group have a tendency to pursue difficult and challenging tasks which provide opportunities to demonstrate their competence. They are likely to have strong self-efficacy expectations which, evidence indicates, is required to successfully combat the obstacles encountered when striving to achieve high-flying goals.

Work centrality, a component of achievement motivation, is seen as useful to assess the extent to which an individual's career is a fundamental part of their adult life. High involvement and commitment with work is shown to indicate high work

centrality, characteristic of high-flyers in past research. Furthermore, work serves as a means of identification to the self and society. Expansion of one's career identity is argued to be engendered by the need to detract attention from other sub-identities which could be gender, disability or sexual orientation. This thesis intends to explore if the occupational success of disabled people is influenced by the concept of sub-identity growth.

Although much research has been conducted concerning the influence of locus of control, work centrality and need for achievement on the achievement of career success, the focus has been on the non-disabled majority. This gap in academic literature calls for similar research to be conducted using a sample of disabled high-achievers in order to ascertain whether they also have an internal locus of control, high need for achievement and a belief that their work is central to their lives.

4.4: CAREER CHOICE & EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Career choice not only refers to the choice of an occupation but also concerns itself with the manner in which people arrive at an occupational choice. Hall (1976), along with other developmental theorists, recognises that an individual's career changes, and that different stages are marked by different needs, concerns, commitments, aspirations and interests. Hall (1976) maintains that careers are organic entities, with developing life-cycles, which interact and reflect the individual's life, past, present and future. The impact of differential life roles and changes to an individual's career choice will be discussed in this section.

Interests are assumed to be an important determinant of career choice (Hanson, 1984b). These interests are said to develop as a consequence of being directly and vicariously exposed to diverse activities, by interpersonal environments. In addition interests are instigated, through the different reinforcements of significant others, to pursue certain activities and to achieve particular levels of performance. It is largely through repeated activity practice that children and adolescents are able to, gradually, develop their skills, adopt personal performance standards, and form a sense of efficacy at diverse tasks, as well as a set of beliefs about what will happen if they perform these tasks. The various facets of adult life which serve to shape individuals' career development and inform their career choices are explored further in this section.

Traditional career models rest on the premise that individuals learn job-related skills and map career possibilities, then choose careers and move within them (Hall, 1976; Schein, 1979). Thus, career progression has been taken, by several researchers (e.g. Gutek and Larwood, 1987), to imply climbing a hierarchy; increased salary, increased recognition and respect; and greater freedom to enjoy interests. However this conception of career progression is principally objective and neglects the more personal subjective side. Further, it fails to account for the different work expectations, motivations, opportunities and potential barriers of career development that exist for minority groups such as women or disabled people. The literature reviewed here examines how disabled people can progress in the professional arena, and whether they are able to achieve conventional success, or need to pursue unconventional routes to reach their success goals.

4.4.1 Career choices and development

Holland's theory, first presented in 1959, emphasised the "searching" aspects of person-environment fit. He described the choice of an occupation as an expressive act reflecting a person's motivation, knowledge, personality and ability. Further, as understood by Hodkinson and Sparks (1997), career decisions are context-related and cannot be separated from the individual's family background, culture and life history. Many researchers (e.g. Hall, 1969; Vondracek, 1986; Holland et al, 1994) agree that careers represent a way of life, an environment rather than a set of isolated work functions or skills. Moreover, individuals see their careers as part of them, as something that can grow, change and develop with them throughout their lives. For example as stated by Holland (1958):

“...To work as a carpenter means not only to have a certain status, community role, and a special pattern of living. The choice of occupational title represents several kinds of information: the S’s motivation, his knowledge of the occupation in question, his insight and understanding of himself, and his abilities.”

(cited in Brown et al, *Career Choice and Development*, 1996, p.35-36)

The notion of developing one’s career over an entire life-time is a more recent addition to the work on career theory. This approach, introduced by Super in the 1950s, as the life-span life-space approach to career development, brings together life-stage psychology and social role theory to convey a comprehensive picture of multiple-role careers, together with their determinants and interactions. As Super et al (1996) maintain, in order to understand an individual’s career, it is important to know and appreciate the web of life roles that embeds the individual and his or her life concerns. Thus, the life-cycle approach addresses the life situation in which an individual lives, whilst focusing on how people change and make transitions as they prepare for, engage in, and reflect on, their life roles, especially the work role. Furthermore it acknowledges that a large and complex set of factors interact dynamically in determining the course of careers. Such factors include life events, conceived as ecological determinants of marked intra-individual changes. They also represent dynamic moments in person-environment interaction (Faltermaier, 1992).

Life events differ in their meaning for the subject; some are peripheral, others central. Sometimes they mark a turning point in one’s life which, Strauss (1962)

maintains, occurs when an individual has to take stock, to re-evaluate, revise, resee and rejudge.

Strauss claims that turning points are found in all parts of our lives, including occupational careers. For instance, they may be understood as a trigger to personal development: the beginning of an education, a job or a partnership. Hodkinson and Sparks (1997), in their study, discern three different categories of turning points. The first category is structural and determined by the external structures of the institution involved. For instance, students go through one such structural turning point at the end of their compulsory schooling when they have to decide whether to stay on to further their education full-time or leave and pursue a different direction. Another is at compulsory retirement age. The next category of turning points are referred to as self-initiated, in that the individual concerned is instrumental in precipitating a transformation in response to a range of external factors in their personal life in the field. Finally, turning points can be forced onto some people by external events or/and the actions of others. One such turning point, experienced by several of the high-flyers in this research, is having a debilitating accident. Such an event would have a causal effect on the direction of one's future.

Empirically there is no doubt that life events influence individual development. Some researchers (e.g. Callahan & McCluskey, 1983) maintain that the individual is a passive recipient of external influences and is expected to adapt optimally to environmental changes. However, other research suggests that such an approach tends to obscure the developmental process in some respects, and stress that the individual should be seen as active and as the producer of his/ her own development

(Lerner & Busch-Rossnagel, 1981). Individuals interpret changes in their environment and are able to change the environment themselves by initiating life events, planning their future and even consciously promoting their personal development.

Vondracek et al (1983a, 1983b) point out that vocational and career development can be fully understood only from a relational perspective that focuses on the dynamic interaction between a changing individual in a changing context. Driver (1988) concurs with this, believing that there is a growing consensus that career includes both work and non-work activities. Super et al (1994) argue that too many career theories ignore the fact that while making a living people still have a life. The work role, albeit a critical role in contemporary society, is only one among many roles which an individual occupies. A person's multiple roles interact to shape each other. Thus, individuals make decisions about their professional life (i.e. career choices), within the circumstances imposed by the constellation of social roles that give meaning and focus to their lives. As Arthur et al (1999) suggest, careers are organic entities, developing through different stages which are shaped by complex interactions between personal make-up and choice, and the external forces of family, class and residential, economic and organizational circumstances. They illustrate this, in Chapter 5 of their book *"New Careers"*, with the case of a trained and qualified nurse whose career has been interrupted, and contained periods of part-time employment while she gave priority to her family. Despite many transitions, and the risk of fracturing her career to accommodate family needs, the nurse advanced in her profession by using the expertise and confidence she had built up by her experiences over the years. Arthur et al (1999) maintain that the data informing

individuals' career directions come, not only from their paid work role but also, from their wider social roles as family members, partners, volunteers, members of ethnic or class groups, and positions as privileged or underprivileged members of society.

The family, a principal agent of primary socialisation, has been noted, by a significant body of evidence including that presented earlier in this chapter, to be important to one's career choice. Osipow (1983) believes that parents influence their children in general, particularly in their vocational choices. The family has been perceived as a social institution in which an entire array of human experience exists, and, in which early conceptualisations of work and the meaning attached to it are formed. Accordingly, a case can be made for the family's ability to influence members to choose careers traditionally considered gender-appropriate. Social norms and ideological patterns of behaviour have been noted for having a substantial influence on one's career aspirations and choices (Goodale & Hall, 1976; Astin & Myint, 1971). For example, Astin (1984) recalls that her childhood socialisation had a profound impact on her career development. Although her first career choice was architecture, her dreams of becoming an architect never materialised because the social norms of the day dictated otherwise. She claims that her father saw architecture as a sub-field of his own field, engineering, which he considered to be an exclusively male field, and strongly discouraged her from pursuing it, believing it held no opportunities for women.

Goodale and Hall (1976) claim that sons are likely to inherit their father's occupational level. They postulate that a father's occupational status exerts a

considerable influence over his son's career achievement by affecting his education and his first job. For example, Allen (1988), in her study of doctors and their careers, found that men's choice to study medicine was often related to the fact that their father or another member of the family was a doctor. She found that the women were more likely to have felt a strong desire to 'help' people from a young age. Fitzgerald and Betz (1983) suggest that the different expectations of the sexes in society can have a preponderant impact on the direction of an individual's vocational development. This can be supported by Astin (1984) who argues that, although the basic work motivation is the same for men and women, they tend to make different choices and have different motives for their pursuits. This may result from their different early socialisation experiences, and the structure of opportunity which ultimately influences the values that are transmitted through the socialisation process (e.g. sex-typing of jobs, discrimination). In her thesis, Astin maintains that work expectations begin to develop early in childhood through the process of socialisation, whereby the values of a particular society are gradually inculcated through spoken word and the examples of parents, teachers and other adults. As a result of childhood experiences including play, helping with household tasks and engaging in early paid work activities, individuals develop certain expectations as to what kind of adult work activities are available to them. Furthermore, they have an understanding of what activities they are best capable of performing, and the extent to which these activities will best satisfy their survival, pleasure and contribution needs. Therefore, in the process of satisfying these needs through childhood activities, the individual gets certain experiences that directly influence their career choice and work behaviour.

4.4.1.1 Interests

Vocational interests (i.e. people's patterns of likes, dislikes and indifferences regarding various occupations and career-relevant activities) have been assumed to be a potent ingredient for making career choices (Lent et al, 1996). It has been asserted that people form enduring interest in an activity when they anticipate that performing it will produce valued outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Lent, Larkin & Brown, 1989). Conversely, people may form aversions to activities in which their self-efficacy is weak or where they anticipate receiving neutral or negative outcomes. According to a model developed by Lent et al (1993), emergent interests promote particular goals for activity involvement. This means that as individuals develop an affinity for an activity at which they feel efficacious and expect positive outcomes, they form goals for sustaining or increasing their involvement in that activity. These goals, in turn, increase the likelihood of actual activity practice. The attainments accrued from activity practice such as trophies, grades and self-satisfaction, form an important feedback loop which facilitate the culmination or reshaping of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. This promotes particular career interests which, in turn, are important to future intentions and plans to pursue a particular career path. This process is constantly in motion throughout a person's life span and, it is through this process that people come to develop characteristic patterns of career interests.

Although career interests tend to stabilise by early adulthood (Hansen, 1984b), change and growth in interests is theoretically possible at any point in life. From childhood, young people amass conceptual structures (schemata) which serve as tools for understanding their experiences. A schema structures what a person knows

about the world, by filtering out the 'irrelevancies' and allowing sense to be made of partial information. As new experiences are gained, schemata are modified, and as they change so does what is recognised in the surrounding world. In this dialectical way, as Hodkinson and Sparks (1997) argue, the life history of the individual shapes, and is shaped by his/her practice. Therefore when people are presented with environmental conditions or life challenges such as job restructuring, childbirth, technical innovations or exposure to new activities, their schemata changes which, in turn, influences their actions. As well as environmental conditions, a number of personal and contextual variables – such as gender, race/ethnicity, physical health/disability, genetic endowment and socioeconomic status – have been proposed to have a substantial impact on career choice and direction. For instance, gender and ethnicity, viewed as socially constructed aspects of people's experiences, shape the learning opportunities to which particular individuals are exposed, the interpersonal reactions (such as support and indifference) they receive for performing certain activities, and the future outcomes they come to anticipate. This is exemplified by Eccles (1987) and Kimball (1989) who argue that parents and teachers tend to treat boys and girls differently in terms of the activities they are encouraged to perform, how well they are expected to do, and the sorts of social reactions that are provided. Such treatment is based on culturally shared experiences about gender-appropriate behaviour. Likewise, Hackett and Betz (1981) contend that, as a result of the gender-biased access to opportunities for practising and observing particular behaviours, girls are more likely to develop self-efficacy for female-type activities, such as artwork or domestic tasks, and to feel less efficacious at activities that are culturally defined as not feminine. They propose that, as a result of socialisation, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship

to many career-related behaviours, and thus are restricted to a limited range of occupations. This could also be applied to men who are just as likely to avoid traditionally female activities and behaviours due to being nurtured to behave according to norms acceptable to their gender. Such externally imposed barriers do, however, become internalised and could cause impediments to an individual's career options which, over the years, have been directed by societal ideologies and the expectations of men and women towards particular occupations. A similar psychosocial process may affect the career related self-efficacy and outcome expectations in children and young adults with disabilities.

4.4.1.2 Patterns of career development for disabled people

The opportunities available to people to develop as individuals, citizens and workers are significantly influenced by ecological issues and social contexts composed of a combination of political, social and economic environments (Herr, 1996). These have a significant impact on their possibilities for choice, the knowledge available about opportunities open to them, and the reinforcement of their behaviours. Herr (1996) emphasises the invaluable effect that environmental stimuli, social metaphors, traditions and value structures have on human behaviour. These ecological constructs serve to define physical and psychological boundaries within which various individuals perform their daily transactions.

Many everyday activities such as the distance people walk, the steps they climb, the materials they read and the messages they receive, impose stringent requirements on persons with different levels of functional skills (Hahn, 1988). However this is not necessarily a deterrent for pursuing a career. According to a study by The Chicago

School of Sociology, a “career” is a device for exploring the individual identity as it embraces non-work as well as work experiences, and subjective as well as objective components. Such a perspective broadens its focus from professionals and managers in traditional bureaucratic structures to all adults in more dynamic and flexible situations. Therefore it succeeds in incorporating disabled employees who may, due to the threat of social or physical obstacles seen to prevent traditional hierarchical advancement, need to be flexible and innovative in order to advance by achievement. For example, Hendey (1999) maintains that disabled people in receipt of personal assistance, especially from communal care agencies or residential homes, are often denied the right to be flexible in their daily lives. Limiting flexibility and spontaneity, by predetermined support provision, makes it impossible for disabled people to integrate into the community or move to another city to develop professionally and respond to their changing needs.

A further way disabled people can advance is to follow individualised career paths and become sculptors of their own careers. This may help them to avoid barriers, have a constant awareness of opportunities to advance, and have the ability and application to capitalise on them. Being sculptors of their own careers gives individuals the flexibility to follow career routes which, they anticipate, may present them with opportunities to achieve and enhance productivity levels without being physically limited by demands of traditional mainstream competitive work settings. As Lysaght et al (1994) argues, the success of people with severe disabilities is hampered by the full-time competitive work schedule that fails to account for the reduced activity tolerance levels of these persons. Thus there is a need to develop a

means whereby workers with disabilities have opportunities to maximise their productivity and strive towards long-term success.

However research evidence has revealed that it is not uncommon for disabled employees to retain traditional views about employment and careers, expecting to stay with their current employer and to be promoted. According to the Labour Force Survey (1998), disabled people tend to be more loyal than many other employees and have a tendency to remain with employers for longer periods. A possible reason for this could be that many employees with disabilities require accommodations in their homes, and services in their communities that make them far less likely to make regular job and employer transitions during their working lives. This is contrary to the recent career path orientation of many non-disabled employees who, as indicated in King's (1999) study, are concerned with making sure they have the right range of skills and experience for future employability, and are not deterred from regularly changing job and employer to achieve this. As has been shown by OPCS surveys, it is common for people already in work to move to other parts of the country to acquire more skills and greater experience. In present circumstances, however, geographical mobility is difficult, if not impossible, for many disabled people. Many disabled people use personal and domestic services provided by local authorities or voluntary agencies (Barnes, 1991; Hendy, 1999). Bagum (1990) argues that service delivery tends to be structured around predetermined tasks instead of user preferences and is often unpredictably timed.

A further barrier to geographical mobility is the short supply of housing accessible to disabled people. Despite the DCDP's (1986) contention:

“Every individual has the right to live in an ordinary house in a ordinary street”

(cited in Barnes, 1991, p. 149)

in Britain this right is not extended to a large number of disabled people. Mainstream dwellings in both private or public sectors are designed explicitly for non-disabled people, in particular those who are ‘male, fit and aged between 18 and 40’ (Rowe, 1990). The housing needs of disabled people are rarely considered within the general area of housing provision and when they are it is usually within a ghetto of so-called ‘special needs housing’ (Morris, 1990), meaning small clusters of accessible homes set within mainstream housing estates. However, because the availability of this type of provision is limited throughout the country, disabled people may have to forego any career advancement opportunities that may involve moving to another area (Barnes, 1991). This could have a detrimental effect on the career development of many disabled people. Further, it serves to explain, in part, why disabled people tend to stay with one employer for a long time compared to their non-disabled colleagues. Thus, one may argue that although such a pattern of career development is not always, especially in the last decade, regarded as conventional for the non-disabled majority, it could be seen as relatively typical for disabled employees.

However, such a pattern of career development, i.e. working for one employer for a long time, was not unpopular for the female executives in Hennig and Jardim’s (1978) study. The women were unlikely to take advantage of advancement opportunities which involved regular company moves. In fact, having found a suitable organisation, none of the women worked for any other firm because they felt that once they had established good working relationships it would be

unproductive to move to another company where they would have to go through the process all over again.

4.4.3 Conclusion of Career Choice and Experiences

Much work on career development has sought to understand that, as a career develops, multiple life roles interact to shape each other. To understand an individual's career, it is important to know and appreciate the web of life roles that embed the individual and his/her life concerns. No decisions concerning individuals' work role behaviour, such as occupational choice and organisational commitment are made without the influence of other social roles. For example, dedication to a job may differ for two individuals in the same job because one is also active as a spouse, parent and Girl Scout leader while the other is also active as a daughter, sister and swimmer.

In addition to the process by which one develops a career, the influences and determinants of career choices are explored. Life events are noted as causal triggers or turning points in an individual's career development. They could be central or peripheral, planned or unforeseen, but nevertheless have the potential of fuelling, changing or suppressing individuals' life development. This thesis attempts to determine the particular life events that are seen as critical to the career development and progression of disabled high-flyers.

Abilities and interests, both those possessed by the individual and those required by the occupation or other environment, were discussed as having a significant influence on a person's career choice. People take a keen interest in an activity

when their performance in that activity is successful in terms of producing valued outcomes. The opposite is true if performance in an activity is poor or devalued. As such, emergent interests combined with self-efficacy and outcome expectations promote particular goals for activity involvement. However these can not function alone in shaping vocational outcomes. Other personal and contextual variables such as physical health/disability, gender and socioeconomic status are intricately related to the career choice and developmental process. The effect of physical disability on career choice and development is a fundamental focus of this thesis.

As mentioned in previous chapters, people's disability is sometimes the result of the physical society not being accessible for its diverse membership. This would indeed have an important influence on the career choices of disabled people as well as their ultimate level of career success. The limited provision of accessible housing and supportive facilities throughout the country serves to restrict or hinder the geographical mobility of workers with disabilities. Thus, it can be argued that although disabled people may have similar views of career development to non-disabled people, they are forced to stay with one employer for a long time as opposed to undergoing regular moves and employer changes. This research seeks to identify different career patterns followed by a group of disabled high-flyers.

CHAPTER 5:
RESEARCH STRATEGY
AND METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research strategy and methods that were chosen to conduct this research. Section 5.1 considers the rationale behind the selected research strategy. It considers the principal concerns of qualitative modes of discovery, and the approach deemed most suitable to facilitate human inquiry and the elicitation of quality data. It also discusses the role of empathy and the shared experiences between the researcher and the researched, in terms of their influence on the education of rich quality data. Further it explains why the inclusion of respondents' perspectives is so critical to the development of new theoretical ideas. Section 5.2 examines the research design adopted, including the interviewing style, the interview structure, the research setting and the selection of the target sample. Section 5.3 outlines the field work process at both stages of the research, the pilot and main stage. Finally Section 5.4 explains the approach to qualitative data analysis adopted.

5.1 Research Strategy

As Blaikie (1993) argues, the choice of research strategy can be influenced by the need to match it to the nature of a particular research project and the kind of research questions which have been selected for consideration. Furthermore it will reflect the researcher's personal preference for a certain philosophical position on the nature of social reality and how it can be achieved.

This research aims to discover the extent to which disabled high-flyers perceive their childhood, education, personality and career development and choice to influence their career success, and to investigate differences and similarities between them according to their gender and onset of disability. Furthermore it strives to find out how disabled high-flyers define success. The means of enquiry used may be described as qualitative, as it is an approach principally concerned with meanings and processes that are not measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency as is emphasised in quantitative research. Qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, getting closer to the perspective of the researched because of the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that qualitative researchers are more likely than quantitative researchers to confront the constraints of the everyday social world, and to seek answers to questions that emphasise how social experience is created and given meaning. Thus this research holds constructivist ontological assumptions with its interest in disabled people's experiences of career development in a mainstream society and the way in which their accounts are part of the world they describe. This means that realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple and intangible mental constructions and dependent for their form and content on the individual disabled high-flyers holding the constructions. As postulated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), constructivist thinking places an emphasis on the world as it is lived, felt and undergone by social actors. Constructivists (e.g. Goodman, 1978; Gergen, 1985) also argue that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. According to Maynard and Purvis (1994), people's accounts of their lives are culturally embedded.

Their descriptions are, at the same time, a construction of the events that occurred, together with an interpretation of them. Therefore, as Iarskia-Smirnova (2001) argues:

“...the memories that help us make sense of our life are both socially constructed and personal phenomena, embedded in the subjective experience of each individual.”

(cited in Priestley, 2001, p.102)

Furthermore, constructivism is deeply committed to the view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. As Neuman (1994) argues, the social world is not objective at all, but a subjective entity, consisting purely of the perceptions and definitions of social actors. Therefore, knowledge about this subjective social reality is derived from describing and interpreting people's definitions of it, by using procedures such as interviewing and participant observation to facilitate researchers to investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to the task (Morgan and Smircich, 1980).

Although both qualitative and quantitative researchers think they have made new discoveries worthwhile to the rest of society, quantitative researchers seldom capture the perspective of social actors as they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical materials (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore they both differ in the ways by which they address the same sort of issues. Qualitative research operates from a different epistemological position from that of quantitative researchers. Whilst quantitative research follows a positivist model of knowledge of how the social world should be generated, qualitative research is inevitably drawn towards a more ideographic methodology as a consequence of its interpretative philosophical

orientation. It encourages the use of ethnographic methods, i.e. semi-structured interviewing or observation, to understand how people make sense of their worlds (*verstehen*).

In practice, adopting a constructivist approach to research means using methods that seem most suitable in eliciting the respondents' perspectives and definitions of their social reality. Outhwaite (1987), for example, states that the conception of the object of inquiry will crucially determine the sorts of methods that are appropriate to its investigation:

“The ethnomethodological approach of conversational analysis will not help us understand the rate of profit in a capitalist economy, nor will the law of value help explain how one can terminate a telephone conversation without embarrassment.”

(Outhwaite, 1987, p. 57)

Outhwaite (1987) further maintains that qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing is the most useful means of investigation for social enquiry since, common sense descriptions of social phenomena must be taken as the starting point for social scientific theorising.

Therefore, in order to preserve the richness of the respondents' descriptions, the researcher must avoid using processes that produce responses in terms of succinct, summarised generalisations. Such generalisations and inferences immediately remove the richness that individual descriptions and perceptions of their life preserves. Therefore, this study used the micro-narrative technique (Baumeister et al, 1990) which entails the researcher listening to, and examining how the respondents perceived

and described aspects of their life and significant people in it. Further, it is designed to focus on specific events and represent each respondent's subjective evaluation of the event. Micro-narratives have been used, by previous researchers (e.g. Heatherton & Nichols, 1994) to identify focal events, relationships and behaviours that have induced major change and progression. Thus they were considered suitable for the current research which expects to reveal success stories that not only follow the basic structure of progressive narrative, but also describe major turning points, potential barriers, suffering and challenges, followed by successful resolution.

5.1.1 Choice of the Qualitative Approach

The nature of the research questions being considered and the essence of the subject matter under investigation must both be taken into account in the choice of any research strategy.

The research questions are essentially exploratory in nature: as a qualitative research topic, the career development of disabled high-flyers and their personal perceptions of career success have received little attention to date. The literature shows that most research into career development and success have been largely based on non-disabled men (e.g. Super, 1957; Ginzberg et al, 1951; Cox & Cooper, 1988; Cooper & Hingley, 1985), and, only more recently, their female counterparts (White et al, 1992; Sturges, 1996). Super (1981) hypothesised that the career patterns of men are essentially applicable to women with a few modifications, but Astin (1984) indicated that men and women make different choices as a consequence of their socialisation experiences and different structural opportunities. However, much of what is known about the stages through which an individual passes en route to their aspired occupation seems to be

reliant on the non-disabled individual. Therefore, by conducting a qualitative investigation on the career development and success of individuals with physical impairments, the current study attempts fill the gap in the growing body of discourse on career development and career success.

For an exploratory study of this kind, it is generally accepted that qualitative methods offer the most appropriate means of answering the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (1989), for example, indicate that the kind of research questions most amenable to qualitative methods are exploratory ones which examine what are the salient themes, patterns and categories in participants' meaning structures. The questions this research is seeking to answer are of this type. Neuman (1994) argues that qualitative methods are frequently used to address exploratory research because they tend to be more open to using a range of evidence and discovering new issues.

Cassell and Symon (1994) agree that qualitative methods are more appropriate for exploratory studies, since they are more concerned with emergent themes and ideographic description. In order to research the lives of a small number of people, the qualitative approach was considered most viable for this study, as, according to Gill and Johnson (1991), it is more likely to produce deep, rich quality data. Also, it calls for subjective judgements as well as bringing into play the researcher's own consciousness and experience of career development and disability. Furthermore, it allows the respondents to be directly involved in the study, preserving their perspectives and their expressions, which, although filtered through the researcher's lenses of time and experience, can be used as windows which make their experiences and achievements accessible to others. As Silverman (1993) points out, the aim of

qualitative research is to gather an 'authentic' understanding of people's experiences, and it is believed that 'open-ended questions' are the most effective route to this end. Similarly, Sturges (1996) argues that research investigating the meanings and beliefs of individuals can be carried out best with recourse to qualitative methods such as in-depth or semi-structured interviewing, rather than quantitative methods, such as surveys.

Gill and Johnson (1991) believe that employing quantitative methods can impede rather than aid the research process. They assert that respondents might often be constrained or impelled by the closed-ended questions and prompts of an interviewer, or the rubric of a self-completion questionnaire. Furthermore, they conceptualise quantitative methods to generate responses which, although fit into the conceptual and theoretical structure of the research, provide little opportunity for the respondent to articulate ways in which he or she personally conceptualises and understands the subject matter.

The view that there are some areas of social reality, such as values and beliefs, which statistics cannot measure, is shared by many writers on social research. Okley (1994) points out that people's beliefs, values and actions are not necessarily revealed through head counting. Silverman (1993) affirms that quantification can both cancel as well as reveal basic social processes, and suggests that qualitative methods may be particularly useful when the participants' views on the research topic are somewhat uninformed.

Silverman's view is especially relevant to this research topic, since many disabled professionals may not be able to articulate their personal conceptions of, and influences

on their career success in a manner that is quantifiable. Furthermore, as the study is concerned with areas of social reality, such as the personal perspectives, values and beliefs, which statistics cannot measure, than it can be seen that, while quantitative data might be statistically significant, they are not necessarily valid. As Sturges (1996) argues, inviting respondents to complete a structured questionnaire with closed questions, as part of a quantitative research project, is unlikely to help them surface their beliefs.

Furthermore, using qualitative methods endorses the significance of marginalised voices, i.e. the voices of disabled high-flyers. In the current research, it enables the researcher to listen to the different voices, encountered during the fieldwork, and to include them in the research. Davis et al (1999) believes that these different voices may hold conflicting perspectives on the same phenomena and that there may be multiple competing versions of what constitutes 'the real' or 'the truth'. Similarly as Leicester (1999) affirms, different groups do sometimes have different experiences of the world and, in that sense, have different but valid perspectives on it. Thus, it can be suggested that the widely shared experiences of a particular social group serve to contribute to society's or individuals' collective knowledge of the social world. A further advantage of using such an approach is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to illustrate different persons' concepts of success, empowerment and oppression. It can also create the space through which a variety of people empower themselves (e.g. disabled readers and the researched) by legitimising their everyday experience.

Using qualitative methods therefore, seems to offer the best means of producing data which are deep and rich enough to shed light on the little understood subject of what influences the career success of disabled high-flyers. The 'thick' (Geertz, 1973) and detailed analysis generated by qualitative data should yield the most representative conceptualisation of what disabled high-flyers believe influenced their career success and how they define it for themselves. Furthermore, as the research is concerned with learning about the social reality of thirty-one different people with different values, beliefs and experiences, the means of inquiry needs to be open-ended, encouraging broad, unanticipated patterns. However it also requires a semi-structured interview schedule which encourages the generated responses to be about particular subjects, which the researcher considers to be important.

Thus, together with the facilitation of the research questions or a semi-structured interview guide, the adopted approach was conceived to be useful to draw out the principles fundamental to the research, inclusive of specific life changes, motivations and turning points. According to Weiss (1994), an interview guide is a listing of areas to be covered in the interview and, for each area, a listing of questions that together will suggest lines of inquiry. Such an approach can also be referred to as in-depth interviewing or focused interviewing strategies which, according to Burgess (1984), provides the opportunity for the researcher/interviewer to probe deeply to uncover new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience. They are deemed to be the best approach for social research covering new ground. This is because they find out what kinds of things are happening rather than to ascertain the frequency of predetermined kinds of things that the researcher already believes can happen (Lofland, 1971).

The design of the interview schedule used for this research was greatly influenced by the framework used to study the career development of non-disabled high-flyers (e.g. White et al, 1992; Cox & Cooper, 1988). However, for this study, the design needed to be flexible if necessary, reacting to each individual being interviewed and giving careful consideration to their physical requirements, strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring the interview situation was accessible to each of them. Instead of the continual standardising of questions, the researcher was free to phrase the questions as was perceived to be appropriate for the situation, and ask them in any order that seemed suitable at the time. This is supported by Mischler (1986), who believes that interviews are not to be seen as a set of stimuli and responses with no meaning other than themselves, but as the natural discourse that they are. Thus they should be phrased and ordered in accordance with the nature of each interpersonal encounter.

The role of interviewers does not merely entail obtaining answers, but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them. The qualitative technique of interviewing requires the researcher to have an interest and respect for the target respondents as individuals. It also calls for the researcher/interviewer to be flexible in their responses to them as each respondent may disclose different amounts of information. Therefore the researcher has to be versatile with the interview schedule so as to ensure all the necessary information is obtained. This is exemplified by one of the interviews, conducted for this study, which had to be severely truncated due to a combination of limited time available and the slow speed at which the respondent was able to communicate.

5.1.2.1 The use of empathy

The creative relationship that exists between the respondent and the researcher may determine, to some extent, what, and how something is told. According to Daly (1992), researchers' personal experiences play a role in the collection and analysis of data. He argues that listening to respondents' stories may stir personal experiences which, in turn, may affect the direction of questioning, or the extent to which the researchers are willing to probe deeper into issues at hand.

It may be argued that the acquisition of rich quality data, during this study, was facilitated by the fact that the researcher and the researched came from the same minority group, that is, both parties shared experiences of physical impairment and career development. Such a contention is supported by Leicester (1999) who found, in her study about educational integration, that by interviewing individuals with similar experiences, empathy encourages richer interview responses. As has been postulated by many influential writers, objectivity required by 'knowledge' can be derived from shared experience. For example, Wittgenstein, argued that shared agreements in fundamental issues permit shared conceptualisations of the world and therefore shared experiences of it (Wittgenstein, 1953).

Some attributes taken from this researcher's personal biography, such as her childhood disability and experience of segregated education, can have substantial influence on the interpretation of the empirical material collected. Although it can be argued that having prior acquaintance of what is being researched increases sensitivity to the issue, the researcher recognises that it may also blind her to significant aspects of respondents' experiences. Douglas (1985) refers to such potential blind spots as

'black holes'. According to poststructuralists and postmodernists, there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of time and experience. Thus, although the researcher merely listens to the respondents' stories, these are not objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed.

Pearse (1996) believes that, in order to elicit the subject's values, experiences and beliefs, the researcher needs to be able to have similar perspectives. According to Geertz (1973), these perspectives will permit access to the conceptual world in which the respondents live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them. Although some may question whether common characteristics between the researcher and researched will facilitate subjectivity and social conformity, logic dictates that the ability to empathise with one's subjects depends, partly, on the extent to which the researcher's life history resembles those of the subjects (Barnes, 1992). As Barnes (1992) argues, sometimes women researchers are better placed to do research on women, and people with impairments are best equipped to research disability.

Similarly Sussman (1971) points out that minority group members usually have better insights, more commitment and greater rapport with their own than does the general population. Furthermore, in the instance of the current study, the fact that the researcher and researched come from the same minority group facilitated the accessing of potential respondents.

5.1.2.2 The Influence of the Disabled Researcher

Having discussed the influence of empathy in research, that is, the researcher and the researched sharing the same worlds, I think it is appropriate to say a few 'reflexive' words about my influence and experiences as a disabled person and a disabled researcher.

When I first came into this world my brain was starved of oxygen during the first thirty minutes of my life. Had this not happened I would not be physically disabled with Athetoid Cerebral Palsy and my life would have undoubtedly taken a different course. It is almost certain that I would have pursued my childhood career aspirations of being a medical doctor like my father. However, although I still had these ambitions as a disabled child, I soon learned the realities of growing up with a disability in a predominately non-disabled world and my childhood aspirations were forced, by various influential people including teachers and medical professionals, to become dormant. My segregated schooling also failed to cultivate my academic aspirations as the standard of teaching was very poor and the choice of subjects very limited. Nevertheless I found, like several of the disabled people in my study [see Chapter 6, Theme 2], that attending a segregated school, from a young age, is crucial to the personality, psychological and physical development of a disabled child. I was given the physiotherapy and speech therapy I required to function independently in the mainstream world. Further, segregated education gave me the opportunity to explore and develop a sense of self without 'the intervention of mainstream barriers' (Jenkinson, 1997).

It is suggested that when a woman interviews another woman both parties share a subordinate structure by virtue of their gender. Finch (1984) argues that this creates the possibility that a certain kind of identification will develop. Whilst this *possibility* may exist, Anne-Marie Fortier (1998) contends that her gender did not dissolve the distance between herself and the women she was studying. It is difficult, then to support Vernon's (1997) claim that reciprocity is:

"... an inevitable result of an 'insider' researching the lived experiences of the group to which she belongs: through the mutual exploration of the research topic which is of common concern to them both."

(Vernon 1997, p.169-170)

Inevitably there will be class antagonisms within any oppressed community (Callinicos, 1993), something such assumptions appear to mask. In this study, this was particularly marked by the differences in age and cultural background between the researcher and the researched. All of the respondents were older than I was and most were British Caucasian. Furthermore, only some of our life experiences were indeed similar, and these were not identical. So, although I could empathise with the people in my research sample with regards to living as a disabled person and thus interpret the data in a non-oppressive manner, many differences did exist between us that helped me to avoid bias when doing this.

Cultural and age differences aside, my status as a disabled person definitely made a difference to the research respondents. Several openly admitted that had I not been disabled they would have refused to be interviewed. As one of the respondents, Ewen confessed:

"When I realised you were disabled I put your letter to the top of the pile!"

I sensed that several of the respondents became less guarded and more open when they realised we had something in common. Some shared my impairment. For others, identification occurred in terms of our shared experiences of segregated education and partial integration rather than our shared impairment status. Several of the respondents attended the same residential further education college as myself, although at different times, and we bonded over our shared liking of some 'care' and academic staff and our dislike of others. I also discovered, especially during interviews with some of the disabled women, that we shared a determination to succeed by working twice as hard as non-disabled peers and not giving up in the face of oppressive barriers. The PhD process for me was certainly a struggle and I was faced with many challenges, as will now be considered.

I found the PhD process demanding, challenging and occasionally extremely tiring and frustrating. The effects of my physical impairment have prevented me from completing and submitting my PhD within three years as was originally hoped and funded for. For instance as my physical impairment limits the functional dexterity in my arms and hands I am unable to use a pen/pencil and therefore use a computer as a writing tool. However text entry is still slow as I type with one finger. This and the fact that I have to rely on Personal Assistants (P.A.'s), who are not experienced researchers, to search for and locate relevant publications for me, takes time that is not accounted for in the official time allocated to complete a PhD. Furthermore, unfortunately, during the second and third year of the PhD process the turnover of Personal Assistants in my employ was unusually high. Therefore significant time was taken up training new Personal Assistants to assist me with daily living. On several occasions I have had to spend my time advertising for new P.A.'s instead of working on my thesis. Having to

rely on Personal Assistants also influenced my fieldwork in terms of when I could conduct the interviews. Not all of them could drive and, although I could drive myself to many local visits, the majority of respondents lived in different cities all over Britain so I had to consider this when arranging the interviews, as public transport would not be very practical.

However, like the participants of this study, I believe that I can exercise control over my own destiny, and that my successes and failures are the result of my own behaviour, of my ability to work hard to create opportunities, and also of my ability to capitalize on the opportunities presented to me. Moreover I believe my determination and strong need for achievement, stemming from my childhood socialisation (see Chapter 1) , my thirst for independence and experience of disablement, has engendered my ability to persist in the face of adversity and use the resources available to me to achieve my goals. There have been many examples of this during my life. One is this thesis, and another example is my driving license which I acquired after several years of driving lessons and seven driving tests!

5.1.3 Secondary research tools

Popular and academic literature served a critical role in providing insightful and interesting information on one participant of this study. In this study, significant attention was devoted to the biography of Professor Stephen Hawking, a collection of essays entitled '*Black Holes and Baby Universes*'. This secondary discourse was used to supplement the severely truncated narrative obtained during a semi-structured interview between the professor and the researcher. Due to the limited time available to the respondent, the researcher was unable to generate all the responses necessary to

satisfy the aims of the research. However most of the remaining data required was found in his book.

E-mail and the internet were considered to be important research apparatus, both to seek out specific literature from world wide sources, and to target potential members for the research sample. The disability-research list, a world wide electronic discussion list created by Leeds University Disability Research Unit in 1994, has proved to be a useful source throughout the research period. It has permitted the acquisition of world-wide literature and references to significant studies, both disability and mainstream.

5.2 Research Design

5.2.1 The Interview

It was decided that interviewing was to be the best method of gathering data for this research project. Selecting the most appropriate interview format was important. It was believed that, whereas structured interviews would restrain interviewees' responses in much the same way as a questionnaire, semi-structured interviewing was perceived to be the most appropriate as it incorporated a number of prompts and open-ended questions (as argued previously, in 5.1).

It was proposed to carry out interviews with a semi-structured interview schedule, (although used flexibly and imaginatively) to provide some direction to the respondents and help them to focus. This can be advantageous, for in principle, the clearer you are about what is worth asking and how best to ask it, the more you can draw from any kind of informant. The solicitation of 'everything we want to know' is empowered by the life story interview type as it encourages the respondent to recollect personal

experiences and conceptions whilst keeping the subject oriented to the questions of value to the research, using probes and supplementary questions if any responses require amplification. Furthermore, as the research is somewhat comparative, seeking to discover if gender or onset of disability has any influence on the respondents' career success, a degree of structure is desirable.

The primary concern, in the context of this research, is to obtain descriptive accounts of the subjects' cultures, experiences and personal development so as to gain access to the conceptual world in which they live (Geertz, 1973). As mentioned previously, the interview schedule used in the research was influenced by the works of Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982), White et al (1992) and Cox & Cooper (1988) who identified the areas deemed most significant to a non-disabled individual's career development and success. They explored each area in turn using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions so as to achieve a more natural conversational sequence. The research questions were essentially exploratory in nature and concerned the values and beliefs of individuals, both of which indicate the use of a qualitative approach (Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Silverman, 1993).

In the first instance the interview guide was piloted, as is discussed in the following section (see 5.2.2). The data collected, as a consequence of the thirty-one semi-structured interviews underwent rigorous content analysis and is discussed, in Chapter 6, according to the following five themes, shown in a body of literature (reviewed in Chapter 4) to be significant to the career development and success of non-disabled people (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; Cooper & Hingley, 1985; White et al, 1992; Sturges, 1996):

Theme 1: *Career choice, progression and turning points*

This section was concerned with the concepts of career choice and career progression, recognising the impact of differential life roles and life events on individual career choice and orientation. Particular attention was paid to the career patterns adopted by disabled people, attempting to uncover which career paths they are most likely to follow and the reasons behind this.

Theme 2: *Childhood*

There is extensive discourse on the effects of childhood events, and parental and sibling relationships, on later life. Therefore the principal focus here was on the significance of parent-child relationships and parental expectations on the success on the career success and orientation of high-flyers, in particular disabled high-flyers. The role of childhood socialisation was also examined, particularly critical childhood events and the influence of social class.

Theme 3: *Personality, Motivation and Work Centrality*

The objective here was to identify significant personality traits, conceptualised by the respondents to be the most beneficial to their career success. The investigation concentrates on three major areas of personality and motivation, namely Locus of Control, Need for Achievement and Work Centrality which were all examined using qualitative measures.

1. *Locus of control* - concerned with the individuals' perception of how their received rewards are controlled, either internally (i.e. hard work and determination), or externally (i.e. by luck or fate).

2. *Need for achievement* - assessed using Murray's (1938) definition. The aim was to seek information on the respondents' desire to achieve, by identifying what motivates and satisfies them, and the main things they require from a job.
3. *Work centrality* – examines the amount of time and effort the respondent expends on work-related activities and the extent to which their work is central to their life.

Although quantitative scales are usually used to measure locus of control (e.g. Career Locus Questionnaire designed by Makin (1987)), this research measures it qualitatively via a semi-structured interview. Respondents were asked specific open-ended questions, influenced by psychological literature such as: which of their characteristics did they perceive to be beneficial to their career success, what did they do when faced with an obstacle, what motivates them and what satisfies them in terms of their career.

Theme 4: *Education*

Education is an important prerequisite to vocational success. This section concerns itself with the level and subject of education. Furthermore data was obtained on the type of education received (i.e. segregated or mainstream), and how this was believed to influence the career pursuits of disabled individuals. The issue of whether the acquisition of qualifications was part of a long-term career plan was explored.

Theme 5: *Conceptions of Success*

This was concerned with respondents' subjective perceptions of career success. It explores internal and external measures of success.

Fifty potential respondents were sent a letter, requesting their participation in the research and outlining the above topic areas which would be raised in the interview.

The response rate was about eighty percent. However thirty-one were selected to participate in the study on the basis of the criteria discussed below (5.2.2).

5.2.2 The selection of the research participants

In order to answer the research issues, the sample group was formulated on the basis of the following principles:

1. They are employed in a high-status profession with a significant degree of authority, autonomy and/or power to make judgements.
2. They have reached personally desirable positions of power, wealth and/or prestige in their professions.
3. They have a congenital or acquired physical disability which influences their mobility, dexterity and/ or speech. Typical disabilities may include cerebral palsy, paraplegia, thalidomide, etc.

Although no firm decision was taken in the early stages of research about the number of respondents who would be interviewed, the ultimate decision was based on a compromise between the desire to obtain the richest data possible (Lofland and Lofland, 1984) and practical issues of feasibility.

A body of existing discourse informed the researcher of the significant unemployment and underemployment of disabled people, including those with congenital and acquired impairments [see Chapter 1 and 2]. Therefore, specifying further criteria such as gender and the origin of the impairment would, no doubt have caused difficulty in targeting enough potential respondents. This was also the reasoning behind the

researcher's decision to seek potential respondents with occupations classified in accordance with either Social Class I or II of the Registrar General's Scale of occupations by social class. In one case the respondent's occupational status could not be classified in terms of social class I or II, but they worked in specialist non-manual areas and had built a record of educational and work achievements that exceeded societal expectations of disabled people thus were deemed suitable to participate in the study. Due to the diversity of careers explored and illustrated in the current research, the organisations and individuals that were contacted worked within different spheres of the professional sector such as the arts, business, politics, religion, academia and health and medicine.

Thus, the eventual sample size consists of thirty-one respondents, a number which the researcher deems as appropriate to gather sufficient qualitative data, in order to identify trends and formulate theories. The sample consists of four sub-groups: men with congenital disabilities, women with congenital disabilities, men with acquired disabilities and women with acquired disabilities. This not only encourages the generation of rich quality data about each of the sub-groups, but also means they can be compared against each other to produce further quality data.

5.2.3 Pilot interview

In order to provide information to enable the initial interview schedule to be refined, if necessary, it was decided to conduct a pilot study. This also provides an opportunity to practice appropriate interview skills. Such skills, Thompson (1978) suggests, include an ability to be flexible and adaptable to the interviewee's needs, a willingness to sit quietly and listen, and knowledge of when to use supplementary questions or prompts.

Conducting of a pilot interview not only permitted the practising of such skills, it also determined the approximate time scale of the interview and whether any of the structured questions needed further explanation. Further useful information was gained from the pilot interview. This was conducted in a noisy public bar one evening, which with hindsight proved to be an unfortunate choice because the noise, combined with the fact the respondent had a speech impediment, caused the researcher to have difficulty deciphering the spoken words when transcribing the interview. As a result, the data collected was short and succinct, as the respondent's social reality was only disclosed in summary. This was a further learning experience, which taught the researcher to select the research setting carefully, in accordance with the respondent's personal convenience, in order to elicit the best possible quality of data. This refers, not only to physical convenience in terms of time and location, but also in terms of physical and communication accessibility.

5.2.4 The research participants

The sample of thirty-one disabled high-flyers were recruited into the study via various channels including well-established disability organisations, registered charities, the media and networks in different regions of the country, on the basis of the criteria specified by the researcher.

The respondents were identified in the following ways:-

- via the Association of Disabled Professionals, a registered charity established in the early 1970s with the intention of bringing together like-minded disabled professional people and giving them an opportunity to socialise and learn from others.

- via the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation's (RADAR) monthly publication
- via the Thalidomide Trust - a charitable organisation for individuals with the pre-birth drug related impairment Thalidomide
- via a BBC2 documentary series, From The Edge, produced by the Disability Programmes Unit
- via Graeae Theatre Company, which was established in 1981 and has been credited for producing some of the best disabled actors in Britain.
- Through the researcher's social network, or as a result of successful 'snowballing' i.e. getting to know subjects and having them introduce the researcher to others.

The final sample consisted of thirty-one respondents with physical impairments that affected either their mobility, dexterity and/or speech: eleven males with congenital disabilities, eight males with acquired disabilities, nine females with congenital disabilities and three females with acquired disabilities. Details of the four groups of respondents, including their gender, their occupation and the effects of their impairment, i.e. mobility, dexterity or speech are summarised in the tables below:

Table 5.1: Research participants

Gender of respondent	Occupation	Acquired or congenital disability
Male	Sports Development Officer	Congenital
Male	Actor/singer/songwriter	Congenital
Male	Actor	Congenital
Male	TV presenter/musician	Congenital
Male	Financial planning advisor	Congenital
Male	Dancer	Congenital
Male	Parliamentary Officer	Congenital
Male	Curate	Congenital
Male	TV Critic/Writer	Congenital
Male	Church Minister	Congenital
Male	Senior Customer Support Analyst	Congenital
Female	Labour Party MP	Congenital
Female	Retired Solicitor/ Disability Consultant	Congenital
Female	Freelance Journalist/TV presenter	Congenital
Female	Speech & Language Therapist	Congenital
Female	Associate Director of Disabled Theatre Company	Congenital
Female	Disability Strategy Manager for Railtrack	Congenital
Female	Wheelchair athlete/ Development officer for British Paralympic Assoc.	Congenital
Female	University Lecturer	Congenital
Female	Parish Minister	Congenital
Male	Theatre Director	Acquired
Male	Careers Officer	Acquired
Male	Chartered Architect	Acquired
Male	Computer Programmer & Analyst	Acquired
Male	University Professor	Acquired
Male	Management Accountant	Acquired
Male	Barrister	Acquired
Male	Trade Finance Advisor	Acquired
Female	Education & Training Officer for Arts Council/ Visual Artist	Acquired
Female	Artist Director, Performer/Dancer	Acquired
Female	Project Manager for educational charity	Acquired

5.2.5 The research setting

The time and place of the interviews were arranged according to the respondents' convenience. Most of them took place at the participants' homes or workplaces, although in two instances the most convenient setting was a public cafe. The decision to carry out the research in the home or work environment was made because either setting was thought to offer a relaxed and accessible environment for the respondent to function comfortably, thus providing the opportunity to assemble data most likely to answer the research questions. As Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest, the objective of qualitative research is to collect the richest data that is achievable using techniques like semi-structured interviewing, with a small sample of people. The home setting is also advantageous when the research is concerned with childhood and family (Thompson, 1978) - a significant focus of the current study.

5.2.6 Duration of interview

It was discovered that the amount of flexibility required for each interview was somewhat dependent on the personalities of the respondents. The interviews, in general, took between thirty minutes to two hours to complete. According to Thompson (1978), the duration of an interview can vary depending on the personality of the respondent and of the interviewer. In some instances, respondents are very talkative and altruistic with their answers, they need few questions, they just need steering or, on occasion, a very specific question to clarify some point which is unclear. Other respondents, however, can be relatively laconic with their responses, and more likely to reveal rich memories with encouragement, broad open-ended questions and supplementary prompts. In addition to different personalities, the

duration of the interviews in this particular study could be influenced by the vocal clarity of the respondents. A few of them had a speech impediment.

5.3 Fieldwork

5.3.1 *The interview participants*

The fieldwork was carried out over a period of approximately thirteen months, beginning in January 1998 and finishing in February 1999. The difference between the anticipated, and the actual, time duration of the fieldwork was thought to be caused by two main factors. Firstly, (as previously discussed in Chapter 2) very few disabled people enter high-status professions (e.g. Hayslip, 1981; Johnson, 1983), and the majority of employed disabled people are concentrated in poorly paid, low skilled, low status jobs (Walker, 1982; Thomas, 1982), making identification of the proposed target sample a tedious and time consuming task. Potential respondents were often contacted several times before any participation in the research was confirmed. Secondly, once potential respondents were identified, securing a convenient meeting time was the next obstacle. On a few occasions meetings had to be postponed and rearranged. A few people that were targeted did not want to be interviewed. There was one occasion when a potential respondent had agreed to be interviewed and then cancelled the meeting, deciding not to take part in the study.

In the first instance, the researcher approached the organisations mentioned above via a letter containing a brief outline of the proposed research objectives, the means used to meet those objectives, and how their participation in the study would be valuable. The letter (see Appendix A) was sent out to twelve established organisations, and several individuals who the researcher had met during her participation in various

social and professional activities and who she deemed as being qualified to participate in the research. A similar letter (see Appendix B) was sent to the aforementioned organisations requesting their assistance in locating suitable participants.

The participants were reassured about the confidentiality of the interview and permitted the opportunity to contact the researcher if they had any queries about the research. (No-one chose to do this). In fact, the respondents did not mind their identities being disclosed, so their names were used in the research. While the respondents were informed about the general area and intention of the research, they were not told the actual interview questions in advance.

5.3.2 The interview questions and sections

As mentioned in section 5.2.5 the interviews took place in a location chosen by the respondents, usually at their place of work or at their home. The basic interview structure and the subjects covered were the same at both the pilot and main stage of the research. However, the order of the interview schedule (shown in Appendix C) was changed. Originally the interview started with the question '*What does success mean to you?*', and other questions relating to their personal definition of success, whether they perceived themselves as successful, and how the concept of success was defined to them during their childhood. However, after conducting five interviews, the researcher found that the participants were experiencing difficulty in answering these questions, thus inhibiting the anticipated conversational style. It was thought that such a problem was a consequence of the respondents not being suitably prepared for the specified questions.

This problem was resolved after a decision was made to open the interview with the question *How important is your work to you?*, (section 2 of the interview schedule), thus eliciting information about career centrality, preferable life spheres, dedication, commitment and motivation. Here, respondents were prompted to discuss their career to date and the route taken to get there, emphasising the significant turning points, determinants and obstacles encountered during their career progression. The main purpose of this was to encourage respondents to think about their career and how they felt about it.

The researcher discovered that questions about career success were naturally called for at the end of section two of the interview schedule. In most cases respondents provided unprompted descriptions of their conceptions of career success thus inducing further questions included in section one. Therefore, in reality, the sections (1 and 2) entitled *Success* and *Career/Work History* were interchangeable.

The third section sought information about the respondents' personality and how, they believed, it was beneficial to their career development. This section used a series of prompts to establish the degree to which the respondents believed their career success or failure was the result of their own behaviour, or extrinsic factors such as luck. Further prompts, based on existing literature (e.g. White et al, 1992), were used to elicit information about familial influences on personality to determine what particular types of child-rearing practices are likely to result in achievement seeking adults. In fact, other information regarding family and career success was often disclosed here, despite being the topic of the fifth section entitled *Family*.

So, although the interview schedule was divided into six sections, it became apparent, as the interviews progressed, that the six areas identified by the researcher were intertwined. In effect, the interviews gradually moulded themselves into funnel-shaped structures, using the minor questions to fill any holes or clarify any previous misinterpretations.

Education was the topic under investigation in the fourth section. However, in most cases a lot of information regarding the respondents' educational history was disclosed in the early stages of the interview, and identified as a significant determinant of their career success or a milestone in their career progression. The respondents were asked to provide quantitative data about their educational qualifications. They were also asked to reflect on their educational career and voice their opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of mainstream and segregated education. Again, some of the responses obtained were unprompted and succeeded in answering questions from the proceeding section.

The sixth and final section was intended to illustrate how the respondents' experience of disability has influenced their career development and success. Disability was a significant part of the respondents' lives, and thus was discussed, to a certain extent, in almost every section. However, the sixth section focused on the disability, primarily as a causal attribute of career success. It offered the opportunity to discuss any disability-oriented issues in relation to occupational choice, development and success, and encouraged the respondents to talk about the effects of their disability. Moreover, it invited comments on personal perceptions of the significance of disability to individual career success.

Interviews were taped, with the participants' consent, and transcribed in full as soon as possible after each interview. A tape recorder was perceived as being a suitable apparatus for data collection, being considered to be less intrusive than taking hand written notes, as one could quickly lose any immediate awareness of it. However, as Thompson (1978) postulates, while it is turned on people are more likely to keep to the point. Indeed, in this instance, for practical reasons tape recording was perceived to be the best method of data capture for the researcher as well as the respondents. However, the researcher had to be adaptable and be aware of the respondents' physical and communication needs. For example, one respondent had lost all vocal communication, due to the effects of a tracheotomy and therefore used a specialised computer program, operated by a single switch to record his answers to the interview. Therefore, although the conventional interview procedure was to record the interview situation and transcribe it at a later date, those circumstances required a more appropriate method of data collection, whereby the respondent typed the answers on the computer and presented the researcher with a printout. In addition to requiring a more convenient data collection tool, the interview had to be significantly truncated due to a combination of limited time available and the speed of the respondent's written communication.

5.3.3 Problems and successes of the interview process

The process of interviewing generally went smoothly. All the respondents were extremely interested in the research topic and keen to take part in the study. They were also anxious to be kept informed of the study's conclusions after its completion.

Few of the respondents set a limit on the time they made available for the interview. They were very welcoming and friendly, emphasising that they would be available to assist with further queries in the future if required, and this offer was taken up on a few occasions, for clarification of parts of the recorded interview.

5.4 Analysis of Qualitative Data

Existing literature and earlier studies on career development and success strongly informed the process of data analysis adopted for this research. As described previously (section 5.2.1), the interview schedule used for this research was divided into five sections. These represent the themes of success, childhood, personality & motivation, education, and career choice & development, which are seen by previous research (e.g. White et al, 1992) to be significant to non-disabled people's career development and success. This led to the development of an index whereby the interview data could be coded. The creation of the sub-categories under each of the five main themes was also influenced by this existing work, and the sub-questions used in the interview schedule were designed to generate data to fit these categories. However although the sub-questions did indeed facilitate the categorisation of the raw data, the data generated in the interviews did not always correspond to the question asked at the time. This was because the interviews were set up to be somewhat informal in tone and style, encouraging free flowing conversation. It is inevitable then that respondents talk about certain issues or experiences, more than once, at different times during the interview. For example, in this research, data about what motivates and drives the respondents to achieve success emerges at different points throughout the interviews, and not just as a response to the question *What motivates you?* Similarly, social processes such as parent-child relationships and its influence on the

career development of disabled children may be discussed at various stages in the interviews. This is in with the findings of Mason (1996) who found it unlikely that such social processes will be neatly bundled into small chunks of interview text ready for the researcher to categorise and index.

Through analytical reading and rigorous content analysis of the interview transcripts, data was coded and allocated to the appropriate categories or sub-categories, created under the influence of previous studies as discussed above. Strauss (1987) suggests re-reading field notes of different groups so one becomes sensitised to what is different about them. The transcripts were coded by way of 'pattern coding' (Kaplan, 1964) which analyses the work line by line and looks for repeated regularities between the transcripts. The coding of the interviews allowed the data to be divided up and placed into the proposed categories. Examples of these categories included parental influence and expectations, childhood experiences, patterns of motivation, and type of school. The division of the large quantity of data into the proposed categories was conceived to make identification and comparison of themes and patterns between transcripts easier. According to Murphy (1992) the coding paradigm directs the researcher to look for interactions, strategies, conditions and consequences. Furthermore it allows differences and similarities between the sub-groups to be seen more clearly so the researcher could gain an insight into meanings and experiences that may be common to several disabled high-flyers or unique to one.

5.5 Presentation of the findings

The following chapter discusses the findings of this research and presents the results of the data analysis. The way in which they are presented is intended to illustrate and

support the process of data analysis which has taken place. According to Marshall & Rossman (1989), writing of qualitative data is fundamental to the analysis process, for in the choice of particular words to summarise and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act - lending shape, form and meaning to massive amounts of raw data.

Chapter 6 considers the ways in and extent to which the five themes (proposed by an existing thematic framework as key to the career development and success of non-disabled high-flyers) are perceived to be just as significant for the group of disabled people in the study. Furthermore it presents the respondents' conceptions of success in terms of seven criteria (internal and external) which were identified through content analysis of the data.

At a micro level, the problems related to reporting the findings were largely related to what Lofland and Lofland (1984) describe as 'the agony of omitting'. The large amount of data generated by the respondents' interviews, and the pool of interesting analytical patterns that emerged from them had to be controlled in such a way as to best illustrate the findings relevant to the research questions, without being unjustifiably drawn into subsidiary issues. Moreover, as Easterby-Smith et al (1991) argue, one of the most difficult problems to overcome in dealing with qualitative data is how to communicate, in a systematic and honest manner, research findings to a readership who may not be very familiar with the detailed context of the research. These points, noted as important ways of using the data productively and pertinently, were considered to be imperative to the presentation of the research findings. As Sturges (1996, p.96) comments:

“The qualitative researcher needs to be able to convey the richness of their findings, but at the same time make the key theoretical points conspicuous and comprehensible.”

Although the researcher used the method of pattern coding to illustrate the frequency of similarities and differences in the emergent data, it was felt important to emphasise the single divergent issues and try to establish reasons for their diversity.

5.6 Conclusion

In the first instance, this chapter discusses the research strategy and methods chosen this study. It explains that qualitative modes of inquiry, such as interviewing, are deemed most suited to this kind of exploratory study as they encourage the generation of data, from a group of disabled people, about what factors they perceive influences their career development and success, and how these factors operate. Furthermore it holds a constructivist view with its emphasis on learning about the social reality of the participants, through their own descriptions and interpretations of the world.

Although the aim of the interviews is to generate deep rich quality data from the respondents about their experiences and perceptions about aspects of life, the researcher believes that a semi-structured interview schedule is necessary to provide guidance to the respondents while being interviewed, and keep them focused. The design of the interview schedule is explained to be influenced by a framework used in previous studies on career development based on the non-disabled individual. The interview structure is discussed, along with the problems encountered with it during

the pilot stage and the need to restructure the interview schedule so as not to inhibit the anticipated conversational style.

Much of the chapter is concerned about the respondents, in terms of why and how they were selected to participate in this study, their common characteristics and their differences. The implications of the researcher and the researched being part of the same minority group are also examined. Although some of the researcher's life experiences are similar to those of the respondents, this enables the data to be interpreted in a non-oppressive way while, at the same time avoiding bias. Moreover it allows easy access to potential respondents.

The final section of the chapter discusses how, once the interviews were conducted and transcribed, the data underwent rigorous content analysis and was divided into pre-created categories and sub-categories. These categories also represent the areas that the researcher initially considered as being important to the career development of disabled high-flyers.

CHAPTER 6: Results

*“We can talk frankly about our defects only to those
who recognise our qualities”*

(André Manrois)

THEMES AND TRENDS ARISING FROM ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter begins with summary profiles of the disabled high-flyers who were interviewed for this study. It then presents five themes that correspond to the five main sections of the interview schedule. Each theme tells the story, illustrated by first-hand quotes, of how the individuals perceived their careers to have developed and what they believed was significant to their career success. Each theme also focuses on any similarities and differences uncovered concerning gender and onset of disability. Further careful attention is given to how the experiences and views of the disabled high-flyers differ from those of non-disabled high-flyers, studies of whom are reviewed in the literature.

The data collected and analysed are then discussed under the following five headings:

6.1:- Theme 1: *Career Choice, Progression & Turning Points* attempts to identify whether certain life events and turning points had significant influence on the high-flyers' pattern of career progression. It presents three patterns of career progression, according to the respondents' perceptions of their own career development.

Furthermore the thesis examines the extent to which impairment influenced the high-flyers' occupational orientation and success.

6.2:- Theme 2: *Childhood* concerns itself with how various aspects of the respondents' childhood socialisation, including parent-child relationships, parental expectations, childhood disability and childhood experiences, influenced their personal conception of success, and the career direction they eventually pursued.

6.3:- Theme 3: *Personality, Motivation and Work Centrality* presents evidence on the patterns of motivation for disabled high-flyers, and demonstrates the extent to which work is central to their lives. Further this section reports on the extent to which certain personality factors, namely locus of control, determined the respondents' current position in the occupational hierarchy.

6.4:- Theme 4: *Education* presents qualitative and quantitative information on the respondents' educational background including, level of qualifications and educational content. Significant attention is also paid to the type of educational institutions attended by the respondents (i.e. mainstream or segregated) for people with disabilities, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each.

6.5:- Theme 5: *Conceptions of Success* examines how success is conceived by the disabled high-flyers. It reports the notion of success as construed in terms of five internal and two external criteria, depending on the high-flyers' circumstances, beliefs and values. These criteria, identified through content analysis of the data, will be defined and discussed in this section.

The concept of the five differential themes initially emerged from a review of the existing career success literature (e.g. Sonnenfeld & Kotter, 1982; Cox & Cooper, 1988; White et al, 1992) which had a substantial influence on how the researcher structured the interview schedule. Thus one could argue that the interview structure was designed to elicit data about the five themes. As much of the data was generated to fit into pre-structured categories, influenced by studies of non-disabled high-flyers, it is possible to examine the extent to which the issues uncovered for this study differs from those evidenced by studies of non-disabled high-flyers. This study provides clear evidence to determine whether or not disability has a primary influence in the career success of the respondents.

PROFILES OF DISABLED HIGH-FLYERS

The following profiles tell the stories of the 31 disabled people who were selected to participate in this study. They give a brief history and holistic view of each respondent's personal and career development, and include details of their disability, describing how it affected their career progression. The high-flyers gave permission for their first names to be used in the study. Although all of them achieved different levels of career success, they all perceive themselves to have exceeded what was originally expected of them as disabled people.

Mat – actor

Born in the early 1960s into a middle class environment, Mat's strongest childhood ambition was to become an actor. This was influenced by his "*totally luvvy upbringing*" as both of his parents were actors. But his physical disability, resulting from the Thalidomide drug, caused a deformation to his upper limbs prior to his birth. This restricted his career path. Drama schools, at that time, were inaccessible to disabled people so, after completing his A'Levels at a mainstream school for boys, Mat spent fifteen years as a drummer of a rock and roll band as he realised "*there was a maximum barrier between the audience and the disability*". He 'came out' as a disabled person after watching a production of BooBoo by Graeae, a theatre company for disabled people when, he claims: "*I suddenly realised that I could do what I really wanted to do all along which was act!*" So he auditioned for Graeae, worked with them for three years and then branched out as a freelance, getting work on stage and screen, in the disability and mainstream sector, as both an actor and singer. But Mat's

re-orientated career flourished not only as a result of circumstance but also due to his determination, his ego, and his perseverance even through adversity. As he says *“I was encouraged by my parents not to accept ‘no’ as an answer to anything, which means I have a lot of bruises and a rather tough leathery skin, to be metaphorical. But I’m quite happy with how things have turned out.”*

Nabil - actor

Nabil attended a residential segregated school from a very young age until the age of sixteen. His greatest ambition was to become an actor but he was repeatedly rejected from drama schools. He thought this was because of his congenital physical disability. *“I wrote to drama schools up and down the country and every one told me to get lost, ‘you’re a cripple, you’re in a wheelchair’”*. So he went to university to do a degree in Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology. However, he was still determined to achieve his childhood ambition but concluded the only way he could do it was to create his own theatre company, a theatre company of disabled people, Graeae. Graeae took 5 years to come together and was successfully launched in 1981, The International Year of Disabled People, acquiring its full-time professional status in May of that year. The success of Graeae was undoubtedly a significant turning point in Nabil’s career as it meant he was exposed on television and in the newspapers and, thus started receiving offers for work on stage and screen. Since getting his equity card in 1980 and leaving Graeae in October 1981, Nabil has worked on stage adopting roles such as Hamlet, Jesus in Godspell, Ayatollah Khomeini at The Royal Court. He has also appeared in Dr Who and had the leading role in a Channel 4 production, Death of Graffiti. He also aims to write and direct his own plays.

Dave - Dancer/Choreographer

Born in Leeds, into a supportive close-knit working class family, Dave spent much of his childhood exploring and trying out new things, things that he was not expected to do as a disabled child. Although physically disabled from birth as a result of the Thalidomide drug which left him with no lower limbs, Dave was a socially active boy who, greatly influenced by his father's profession in entertainment, enjoyed singing and dancing at family parties, and performing in school plays. *"Whenever there was a school play or anything like that my hand would be the first to go up."*

Dave spent eleven years at a day school for physically disabled students, leaving at sixteen with six CSEs and moving on to a mainstream college of further education. Having no desire to go to university, Dave left college and started work as an indoor postman which, although finding boring and mundane, he continued for nine years.

Dave's professional life took a major turn after attending an integrated dance workshop held by Candoco, a professional international integrated dance company. *"One thing led to another and, after a couple of months I was invited to join the company, Candoco. So I left the Post Office, joined the dance company and it went from there really. This happened 6 years ago."*

After six years of working with Candoco: conducting educational workshops, touring and performing all over the world, Dave went freelance, conducting dance and movement workshops for various groups of disabled people. He also does some acting with various theatre companies.

John - Curate

Born in Liverpool with the physical disability, Spina Bifida, which impaired his mobility, John spent a lot his childhood in hospital. He was not expected to live for

long, and even if he did he was expected to be dependent on others for the rest of his life. However the medical prognosis proved to be incorrect. John spent his early years seeking acceptance from his family and peers. He tried to do this by achieving highly in sport.

When John was eight years old, his father died. This was significant to the emergence of his spiritual being later in his life.

After passing his 11+ examination John went to Lord Mayor Treloars, a boarding school in Hampshire, for physically disabled students. *“This is when I discovered I had a brain”*. Although he had the option of going to mainstream school he felt he would be discriminated against. Treloars enabled him to develop and compete academically and in sport with other like-minded disabled people. It also provided him with positive disabled role models.

John then moved to London and spent five years working as a Debit Clerk for an assurance company. For the following eight years he worked as a disability trainer for the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, during which time he got married. John then set up his own consultancy after studying psychotherapy. However this lasted two years, after which he discovered his calling and trained to become a vicar.

“I think it is the best thing I can possibly do. All the skills I learnt in the past, in my psychotherapy training, doing presentations etc, have really outfitted me for the Ministry. In spiritual terms, it’s almost as if God was preparing me, throughout those years, for this one role.” As a vicar John’s position involves leading services, preparing sermons, conducting baptisms, funerals and weddings, or just visiting someone to make them feel better. He is also chairman of a small charity called

Church Action on Disability which aims to try to educate the church to see beyond traditional stereotypes of disability.

Dean - Sports Development Officer

Born into a working class family in a small village in South Wales, Dean's future prospects were bleak. His family had little knowledge of what it meant to have a child with Cerebral Palsy: a child who had to use a wheelchair, had a severe speech impediment and had limited dexterity control. They did not know what he would be able to do. *"My sister is able-bodied, and I think because of that she's expected to do far more than I was ever expected to do."*

Dean left his home in South Wales at the young age of five to go to a residential school for children with Cerebral Palsy. He left there at sixteen years old, with nine GCSEs and went straight to a segregated residential college where he got three A'Levels, his entrance into Coventry University. Dean's educational career culminated in graduating with a BA degree in Communication Studies, and he then spent many years moving from job to job for various reasons, including disability discrimination. During this time he spent his spare time competing in, or training for, sports events which took him all over the world. What was once only a hobby expanded into a career, so Dean is now a development officer of sport for disabled people. *"I'm in the type of work where my paid employment can and does overlap with the work I do voluntarily."* As Sport Development Officer, Dean is responsible for creating a governing body of sport known as Boccia, a game with soft balls similar to the French sport Boul. Dean is married with two children.

Gordon - Financial Planner

Gordon, brought up into a middle class culture, (a culture that placed a strong emphasis on achievement), was expected to achieve at the same levels to his siblings and peers. The fact he was in a wheelchair as a result of Polio didn't influence what was expected of him. *"I was very rarely allowed to get away with the excuse 'I can't walk, I can't do it.' In nearly everything I did I had to achieve the same as everybody else"*.

His decision to go into finance was greatly influenced by his father, and grandfather, both of whom were bankers.

At the age of eight Gordon went to a mainstream boarding school for boys. The school was extremely achievement orientated, but Gordon had to work twice as hard to overcome the access barriers and prove his academic abilities to staff and fellow peers. He was the only disabled person in the whole school which was hard at times, but Gordon felt it important to be in a 'normal' school. He left the school with sufficient O'Levels and A'Levels to guarantee a place at university. He went to Bristol University, graduating with a BSc in Economics and Accountancy.

Gordon has followed a conventional career route for disabled people: leaving university in 1974 he trained with an accounting firm for four years, specialised in personal taxation and spent a further six years with the same firm before moving into middle management of another firm where he has been ever since. His job involves advising people on their financial planning.

Kevin - Parliamentary Officer

Kevin was nurtured within a supportive environment with parents who encouraged him to strive for, and achieve, high goals. However his career development was

constantly interrupted by periods of hospitalisation to treat fractures, resulting from his physical disability Brittle Bones. *"I had to take leave for 6 months recovery after a major operation on my leg. Then I had to take another 6 months off for neuro-surgery."*

Kevin was turned away from several mainstream schools as a consequence of his disability. He spent four months at a segregated school but left because expectations were too low. He was stubborn, determined and had a strong thirst for achievement that was not being fed at the school for disabled students. So Kevin's parents sent him to a private school where he achieved enough qualifications to study for a degree in Politics and Legislative Studies.

Kevin's work history includes working for Satchi & Satchi. He also spent a year working with a parliament minister in the House of Commons.

However, Kevin developed a keen interest in disability after having two major operations that saved his life, but also left him with a severe speech impediment. He realised that he could use his own experiences to help other disabled people. He decided to combine his interest in legislation, politics and disability and become Parliamentary Officer for two disability charities, The Muscular Dystrophy Group and the Limbless Association, both of which work towards empowering disabled people.

Mick - TV presenter and singer

Born into a working class family, Mick has always been close to his mother and younger brother. Mick's mother, a full-time housewife, always encouraged him to do whatever he wanted regardless of his physical mobility impairment which caused him to limp and wear a caliper on his leg. *"Mum has always been at home and there for me when I needed someone to turn to. I wasn't a 'latch-key kid'. I'd come home and*

there would be biscuits in front of the television.” Mick spent many of his younger days watching television, never imagining that one day, he might be on television himself. His first ambition was to be a musician.

Two things had a significant impact on Mick’s personal development and life choices. First, his father died when he was five years old. *“The memory of my dad dying influenced my attitude to life and to work. It made me realise you only live once so what’s the point of doing a boring job!”* Three years later his mother remarried. Mick and his brother did not like their stepfather and visa versa. *“He was the typical step father! He didn’t like us much and used to beat us.”* So Mick did everything he could to annoy him including wearing make-up and becoming interested in alternative dressing and music. This was also influenced by his sudden near death experience at age fifteen, after which he had to use a wheelchair for the rest of his life. *“I realised, after the scare of almost dying, that I should do what I want to do and not try to meet the expectations of significant others.”*

Mick wanted to go to the University of Central London but it was not accessible for wheelchairs so he started a musical career as the lead singer and songwriter of his own band, Euroticies. The band performed many gigs in fetish clubs which was where, on one such occasion, he was spotted by a talent scout. From then on Mick worked as a presenter on various television shows, including *Beat That, The Poetry Show, Telethon, Wam Bam Strawberry Jam* and *From the Edge*. His television career was far from smooth and he encountered several instances of disability discrimination. *“The biggest obstacle I’ve always found is getting past people’s perceptions. They find it difficult to comprehend a disabled person can be a star!”*.

Mick also works as a freelance journalist, writing reviews for mainstream and disability publications.

Chris - TV Critic

Chris was born fifty years ago, in Liverpool, to supportive parents who helped him achieve whatever he was wanted although they were not sure what a child with severe mobility, dexterity and speech impairments, resulting from Cerebral Palsy, could achieve. Chris's disability and his only-child status made his parents, especially his mother, very protective of him. *"My mother took on all the responsibility for me. She's been the dominating force in my life."*

Chris attended segregated education throughout the first part of his educational career. From the age of eleven to eighteen he studied for O'Levels and A'Levels at a residential school run by Scope, of which his parents were founders. He continued his education at Liverpool University from where he graduated with a degree in Social Sciences. *"I went to Liverpool University because all the other universities turned me down because of issues surrounding my disability. I was going to do History at university but I couldn't get into the faculty of History so I had to do Social Sciences instead."*

He got to the end of three years at university with a first class degree in Social Sciences and Politics that generated a keen interest in disability politics in future years. However before venturing into the job market Chris did another degree at the Open University. He then produced a series for the BBC called Open Door, a video diary of disabled people. From there he got a few short-term contracts for Channel 4. Facilitated by his determination, stubbornness and persevering attitude Chris thought the time had come for him leave his parental home in Liverpool, so he moved to his own flat in London where he employed 24 hour Personal Assistants to allow him to live a full independent lifestyle. But he struggled to find a job and was often the victim of disability discrimination. *"When I go for a job they don't like to say no."*

They take one look at me and say 'no, he can't do that job'. I think people will give jobs to disabled people as long as they're not too disabled." Eventually he got a job working for Scope. Then he became the director of Shape, a disabled charity helping disabled people access the arts. After that Chris went freelance and, now, works as a TV Critic for Disability Now, a national newspaper about disability.

Craig - Church Minister

Craig was born and nurtured within a culture which emphasised the value of achievement and the importance of exceeding others. Craig became very determined and driven. This was partly due to his upbringing and partly due to his physical disability, Thalidomide, a fatal drug that caused one of his arms to be deformed before birth. *"I am very determined. I have high expectations. I never ever quit. That's partly my character but also partly due to my disability."*

Initially Craig studied for a career in the business industry. *"My first degree was in Economics and I worked for 2 years after that as an administrator."* He left this job after two years, upon realising what he was called to do, and went back to university to do a Masters degree in Theology, which qualified him to work for the Church. He has worked as the Minister of a Baptist Church for five years.

Peter - Senior Computer Analyst

Born into a close knit family, Peter was the youngest of three children and the only boy. He was also physically disabled with Spina Bifida, which impaired his mobility and caused him severe kidney pain at times. It also meant, that as a child, he spent much time in hospital having operations. Although no one knew what would happen to Peter after birth or how the disability would manifest itself, his parents and sisters

encouraged him to pursue his own goals. He did so with passion, working hard to achieve high standards and proving his abilities. From early childhood Peter fought to survive which made him stubborn and determined. However, his father also had a substantial influence on his character formation. *"My father was a very professional person who always worked hard and I take after him in that respect."*

Peter's school life was varied. He started at his local infant school, where his two older sisters went before him. However the school would not accept a disabled child so he was sent to a segregated school. Peter then completed his CSEs and O'Levels at his local comprehensive school where he was fully integrated. But Peter had to go to a segregated further education college to do his A'Levels because he had a major operation and needed to be in a supportive environment. Leaving there with two A'Levels, Peter went to university and, graduating with a BSc in Computer Science, got a job as a Computer Analyst for Unisys. *"I have done this job for a number of years, about 8/9 years, more or less doing the same job but the responsibilities have got stronger and harder."* Now he is Senior Computer Analyst, which involves giving support and resolving customer problems. *"I look after the Lloyds TSB Bank. I'm responsible for all the 1200 TSB branches in the UK. There are about 12,000 computers in total."*

Ann - Labour Party M.P.

Ann was brought up in a very traditional working class family with very loving parents who always said *"just do your best"*. They supported her and her brother in anything they wanted to do. Ann's ambition was to become a teacher. Although her parents were not sure what someone with Gaucher's disease (a storage disorder which causes fatigue, bone pain or an enlarged spleen), could physically achieve, they gave

her all the support she needed. However her doctor maintained that pursuing a teaching profession would be completely impossible for a person with a disability like herself. But this only made Ann more determined and she set out to prove him wrong.

Ann went to mainstream school, but she missed a great deal of her secondary schooling as a result of her disability. *"I got my spleen removed when I was eleven, and thus I would be off school for maybe three or four weeks for an operation or something like that."* But she caught up by working alone, thus becoming very self-sufficient. By the time she went to university she was well accustomed to working on her own. She graduated from university with qualifications to teach English, History and Modern Studies. Ann went on to pursue a successful teaching profession, starting as a teacher of English and History in a secondary school, and moving up to Vice Principal and then Principal.

However during this time Ann had not forgotten her interest in left wing politics, influenced by her father's involvement in the Labour Party, current affairs and the health service. Furthermore she became reliant on a wheelchair which increased her mobility 100% more than before when she could only walk for short periods of time and was in severe pain from doing this. *"The wheelchair was the best thing that ever happened to me, everything became much easier and my whole life opened up."*

Ann became more involved with the Labour Party and the Teachers Trade Union. *"This gave me experience and knowledge and allowed me to become a candidate for the Labour Party."* She was elected and now works as a Labour MP for Aberdeen South. Ann's work involves travelling between London and Aberdeen each week. *"The job is split into two. Half of the week is spent in London where I really work as a parliamentarian: asking questions in the chamber, delivering speeches, sitting on committees. I sit on the Scottish First Select Committee. The other part of the job is*

the constituency (Aberdeen South), working in the constituency meeting constituents, businesses and organisations that have to do with the constituency, and talking to them to see what issues there are; trying to help individual constituencies through the bureaucracy that is government. And answering letters and writing letters on their behalf”.

Sue - Retired Solicitor

The oldest of four children, Sue was born to middle class parents who emphasised the importance of academic achievement. *“They both went to Cambridge University, so that had a major influence on their expectations of us.”*, Sue and her younger sister were both disabled from the deteriorating muscle-wasting condition, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, but her parents had different expectations for them, compared with their non-disabled brothers. No one knew what the sisters would be capable of, or indeed how long they would live. However, Sue’s parents supported and encouraged Sue to do as well as she could in whatever she chose to do. *“My family have been absolutely crucial to my development and success. Without parental support being the way it was, I wouldn't have been here.”*

Sue attended mainstream school for the first half of her compulsory education. Had she continued she would have become a Graphologist or Mathematician. But the sixth form was inaccessible to wheelchair users so she had to go to a segregated further education college which was limited in the subjects it offered and had a poor quality of teaching. After this, Sue realised she was not going to be a Mathematician or a Graphologist. Her next choice was to become a Chartered Accountant. But again, the place where the course was being run was inaccessible to wheelchair users. However,

eventually Sue found her career. *"The way my education panned out led inexorably to me going into the law."*

After 3 years at law school, Sue went straight to do her articles with a firm which kept her on as a partner. *"It's not very usual to become a partner straight away. I think part of that was to do with the fact that I was always in the office and he could sell me as 'you can always get hold of Sue'. And it had its benefits. I was always there instead of going out to court or to see clients."* Sue then set up her own solicitors practice where she worked for five years before selling it and retired as a solicitor. In 1992 she set up, and became director of, Equal Ability, a disability consultancy.

Annie - Freelance Journalist

Annie, the middle of three sisters, was born into a very achievement oriented family. All of them were expected to do well, and Annie's physical disability, a growth impairment, did not effect this. *"It was never any good, in my family, to be as good as other people, we were supposed to be better."* Annie's father was a great inspiration to her, and from childhood she was ambitious to, one day, be a journalist, like he was. *"My dad's career in journalism was what set me towards what I wanted to do. I learnt from him, by going down to his office at the Sunday Telegraph to see how he worked."*

Annie attended mainstream establishments throughout her educational career. She started at a primary school in London. Her secondary education took place in a convent in Loughborough, which did not put a strong emphasis on academic achievement. However she passed enough O'Levels and A'Levels to secure a place at Manchester University. *"I went to Manchester University very briefly but didn't do very well because I didn't manage in self-catering accommodation in the middle of a*

big city.” She left in the middle of the first year to go to Nottingham University, a campus university, where she felt safe and nurtured. “Whenever I’m in a smaller pond, I tend to rise to the top of it. Whenever I went into a big area I just sank!”

Now an English graduate, Annie went to Cardiff to do a postgraduate diploma in Journalism. However she left before completing it due to being the victim of overt prejudice by staff and fellow students. *“On a number of occasions I was told I wasn’t suited as a journalist because I was disabled, but I could be a sub-editor which involved sitting in the office editing other people’s work.”*

Returning to Loughborough, Annie got a job as a reporter for the local newspaper. She worked there for six years, by which time she was the editor. After this she worked, as a partner, for a PR company but when this went bankrupt she decided to go freelance. Annie is now primarily a freelance journalist, working for various national broad sheets. However, she also works as a disability consultant for various organisations.

Since Annie got married, she is less concerned with ‘proving’ herself to society, through her work. *“Getting married was a major turning point because it gave me permission to stop having to prove myself at work”*

Caroline - Speech and Language Therapist

The oldest child of three, Caroline was always expected to achieve and meet the high expectations of her parents. The fact she was born with no arms, as a result of the Thalidomide drug, did not lessen her parents’ expectations of her. *“Mum has said that maybe I was treated slightly harder to make me get there and achieve.”*

Caroline’s infant and primary education was varied as she travelled around the world with her family and did not really settle back in England until she was fourteen. She

then went to a local private school for girls which permitted her to do O'Levels and A'Levels and then go to university to study Speech and Language Therapy. After graduating, Caroline worked as a general Speech and Language Therapist for three years, and then got a specialist post working with people who stammer. She is now employed by the Nottingham Community Health NHS Trust.

Caroline is married with two children.

Mandy - Associate Director of Graeae Theatre Company

Mandy was born the only child of supportive parents who gave her a lot of attention and encouraged her to read and achieve academically even though they were unsure how her disability would affect her and her future. *"...my parents saw me in terms of the medical model because I was in hospital a lot, and had been given quite low expectations in terms of how long I would live."*

But Mandy did live and progress into adulthood, although her disability did mean she did not grow to the average adult size and needed a wheelchair to increase her mobility.

Mandy spent most of her education in a segregated school which offered her no opportunity to achieve any qualifications. She then went to a local FE college where she was given one option, to do a course in office skills. Her alternative was to go into a day centre. So she did the course in office skills which took one year. But then she returned to the same college for two more years to do a number of O'Levels and A'Levels which qualified her to go to university and train to become a sociologist.

However after graduating from university, Mandy's aspirations and ambitions changed upon seeing a job advertisement for an arts officer, which was particularly interested in applications from disabled people. Having got the job, Mandy started to

become conscious of what it meant to be a disabled person. She began to be pulled towards disability arts, suddenly realising her calling. She then became involved with Graeae, the touring theatre company of disabled people, starting as an actress part-time. After some years, she advanced to become the company's Associate Director.

Alice - Disability Strategy Manager

The youngest of four, Alice was the second child with a physical disability in her family. Alice was born with a muscle wasting disorder called Spinal Muscular Atrophy, like her sister, Sue. She was brought up in a time when disabled people were not expected to achieve much, but her parents did not accept this and just kept fighting to support and help them achieve their ambitions. *"My parents are very heavily into social justice and that sort of stuff, and I think that has had a huge affect on me. They just kept keeping going. I think that has given me edge of just ploughing on regardless and keeping going whatever comes at me really."* Furthermore the fact that the family was sufficiently wealthy was a great advantage for the two disabled sisters who needed specialist facilities and equipment in order to have a healthy lifestyle. *"...my parents were wealthy enough to afford a vehicle that they could take us both out in."*

Prior to university Alice had a segregated education which, although limited in the subjects offered, permitted her to get a number of O'Levels and A'Levels. She then went on to do a degree in linguistics which she found interesting but not practical in terms of finding a job. After this her career route changed completely and she pursued a career in I.T. She worked her way up the I.T. career ladder, working for a variety of software companies under various job titles including Senior Programmer, Quality Assurance Engineer, Software Manager and Program Manager. After several years

Alice realised her career was not advancing. *“I talked to the Personnel Director because I wanted to do some career planing. I said to her ‘if I wanted to get from my current position to position of UK Managing Director, how would I do it?’ and she just said flatly, ‘you couldn’t’, and, at the time, I thought I need to do something about it.”* So Alice undertook a full-time M.B.A but by the time she had completed it, in 1991, the whole country was in a recession so she could not get a job at all. So this, coupled together with her profound experience of disability discrimination over that year influenced her decision to become a partner in a disability consultancy set up by her sister. *“I had had such a profound experience of discrimination in the work place that I just felt I didn’t want anybody else to have to go though the same.”*

After four years of doing disability consultancy work with her sister, she joined another consultancy in the commercial sector which, unfortunately, after a year, began to experience cash flow problems. This led Alice to get the position of Disability Strategy Manager at Rail Track. She has the responsibility of developing a 10-year strategy to ensure the rail network is accessible to disabled people.

Although, for many years, work was a central part of Alice’s life, as it was something with which she could prove her worth, it has been less so since she met her husband. *“Since I got married or since I met my partner my need for achievement has been much less”.*

Tanni - Professional Athlete

The oldest of two sisters, Tanni was born with a physical disability called Spina Bifida. However, because her disability did not take effect until later on in her childhood it had no impact on what her parents expected of her. By her early teens, Tanni became paralysed, as a result of her impairment, and started using a wheelchair.

Despite this, she was always expected, and supported, to do her best. *“My father always believed that one should never settle for second best.”*

Tanni had a good mainstream education which taught her to be ambitious and to strive to achieve personal goals. It also influenced her ambition to become a British Athlete.

“I started thinking about competing for Britain from when I was about 12 years old.”

So after getting sufficient O’Levels and A’Levels Tanni spent three years at Loughborough University studying Sports Science. Loughborough University was renowned for its excellent sporting education, but it was there that she became the victim of disability discrimination. *“When I went to Loughborough I was made to train at a separate time as, I was told the runners would get in my way. I didn't let it get to me and carried on training with them, and eventually they were OK, but I think if I wouldn't have taken a bloody-minded approach the outcome could have been different, and maybe I wouldn't be competing now. I think the prejudice had a psychological affect and made me more angry which caused me to be more determined to succeed.”*

After university Tanni spent a few years as a full-time athlete, competing in local, national and international events with other disabled athletes. She has competed in the Paralympic Games three times. The second time, in Barcelona, proved to have a significant effect on her life. *“Because I did well in Barcelona it changed the way I was treated and what is asked of me is much nicer as a result of that.”* She recently won four gold medals at the Paralympic Games in October 2000 in Sydney, Australia. In 1996 Tanni started work as a Development Officer for the British Paralympic Association. She applied for the job because it combines her interest in disability and sport. It also enables her to continue competing.

Tanni has recently married her boyfriend and fellow wheelchair athlete.

Annalu - University Lecturer

Annalu, born in South Africa to white middle class parents, both teachers, is the oldest of three sisters. She was born physically disabled with Cerebral Palsy, which impaired her dexterity and mobility. She undergoes regular physiotherapy which ensures her mobility does not worsen and she does not need to use a wheelchair permanently. Annalu also has a slight speech impediment. However her impairments did not make her parents expect less of her. They expected her to do her best. *“My parents moved country and city so I could have the education I needed. They always said to me I have a brain and I would have to use it to get somewhere.”*

Annalu went to a segregated school in South Africa, studying with disabled children who had low expectations and little familial support and encouragement. She was resented for her protective and supportive home background and the fact she aimed to go to university. She was, academically, on par with her non-disabled friends but, in South Africa, at that time, there was no integration of disabled children into mainstream schools. *“My parents tried frantically to get me into a regular primary school at the age of ten, but no one would accept me for various reasons. For example, one of the excuses was that my typewriter would make too much noise and disturb the other children, and I would frighten them.”*

From school Annalu went to Cape Town University for four years, a very different and somewhat daunting environment to the small segregated environment she had been used to. Also, because her segregated education was at a lower level to mainstream education she had to work really hard to get to an equal standard to her fellow students at university.

After graduating with a BSc in Computer Science, Annalu spent a further three years doing a MSc in Biomedical Engineering at Cape Town Medical School where she also taught part-time. She spent the following year teaching in a school for children with Cerebral Palsy, where she set up an assistive technology department.

In 1983 Annalu started a PhD at Dundee University. She completed it in 1986 and was then appointed as a research assistant to do research which followed on from her PhD. After that she had several short term contracts and then got a permanent lectureship at Dundee University, teaching Applied Computer Science.

Hazel -Vicar

An only child, her father a farmer, Hazel had quite an isolating childhood so learnt to occupy herself by pursuing introverted activities such as reading or studying alone. Her parents were advised not to expect anything of their disabled child who had a rare congenital condition limiting joint and muscle movement. However they did support her in whatever she wanted to do.

Hazel spent much of her compulsory education in mainstream schools, but found it strenuous so, at the age of fourteen she left to go to a segregated school followed by a residential segregated FE college where she was encouraged to develop personally and academically without the obstacles of mainstream education. From there she went to North London Polytechnic to do a degree in History finding it difficult to live in a big city, she then moved out of London to Loughborough to do a MSc in Information Technology. After a few years of teaching adults Information Technology at further education colleges Hazel explored the possibility of climbing the career ladder in industry but was told it is not acceptable to have disabled managers. At this point, Hazel started exploring the idea of going into Ministry and decided to pursue a degree

in Theology at Oxford University. Since graduating she has had two jobs in ministry, both in Leicester. Her current job, as Minister of a parish in Leicester, makes her responsible for 7500 people. She conducts marriages, funerals, leads church services and has her own weekly congregation.

Ewan - Theatre Director

Ewan comes from a family of four children. As a child he wanted to be a chicken farmer and follow his father's footsteps. So, after taking some O'Levels, he left the all boys grammar school, much to the disappointed of his parents, to pursue his ambition. But by his teen years Ewan developed a keen interest in acting and decided he wanted to go to drama school. However he had a terrible accident on the way to the college which caused him to lose an arm. He was eighteen years old. The recovery process was slow, but he had not lost his ambition to become an actor. So he went to night classes to do his A'Levels then undertook a degree in drama. During his degree, Ewan suddenly realised his strength was not in acting as much as in directing. *"It may have influenced my practicality a bit, it's probably easier to do as my physical impairment is not in the way of me directing."*

Ewan had a varied work history, working as an Associate Director for the London Bubble and directing various community projects. He went freelance for a while, working with several theatre companies including Graeae where he worked with great disabled actors who served to belie people who tried to convince him that people with impairments can't pursue a career in acting. Ewan then got a permanent contract as Associate Director for Graeae Theatre Company where he worked for five and a half years, after which he left to become the Theatre Director for a regional mainstream

theatre/ cinema in Lancaster where he is responsible for its overall management and programming. Ewan is also a husband and father.

Tony - Retired Careers Officer

From the age of six, Tony lived as an only child in a one parent family, as his father was fighting in the second World War. As a child and young man, Tony was an avid sports enthusiast. *"I played a lot of sport, for instance I was a club runner and jumper and did athletics. I was a rugby player, I was a cricket player, I was a cyclist"*. He wanted to go into the Royal Navy. But at the age of eighteen, after being accepted in the Royal Navy, he had a severe brain haemorrhage that left him paralysed. Suddenly his life changed.

The recovery process was long and hard. Tony had to learn to walk again, talk again, had to re-learn how to feed himself, dress himself etc. He had to learn to live again.

As a newly disabled person, Tony was not able to pursue a career in the navy so he had to reorientate his dreams. He went to university and, despite the physical and attitudinal prejudice towards disabled people at that time i.e. 1959-62, got a degree in Politics and Art at Manchester Polytechnic.

Upon graduating Tony applied for several jobs, and, although he was qualified, was turned down for many because of his disability. *"When I was interviewed, a common reaction was ' Oh sit down Mr..oh, um, thank you very much but no thanks'"*. This had a significant influence on his decision to go into specialist careers work. *"I was interested to ensure that what happened to me didn't happen to other people."* So Tony trained to be a careers officer, during which time he met his current wife. He then worked for two and a half years as a Vocational Guidance Counsellor. In 1971 he got a job as Careers Officer for young disabled people in Nottingham which he did for

twenty years. *"I think I was the right person for the right job at the right time"*. With his job he had the power to influence change in education. He influenced the decision to integrate disabled children into mainstream schools. *"I had an opportunity to speak up and put my views across before the Warnock Committee."*

Tony is now retired, but is still on the board of a number of disability organisations.

Bill - Trade Finance Advisor

Bill and his two brothers were brought up in a middle class environment where education was important. He came from a family where one was expected to go to university and graduate, achieve an acceptable standard of living and have a respectable lifestyle.

After a short period of time at public school, Bill went to grammar school where he achieved substantial qualifications, in terms of O'Levels and A'Levels, to guarantee him a place at university where he did a BA (Hons) degree in International Economics. He then went straight to work for an international corporate bank, the third largest company in the country, at advanced trainee level. *"At the age of twenty one I applied to work for my present employers, with a view to gaining a few years international experience."* However, each time Bill wanted to leave, the company would offer him a promotion he couldn't refuse.

At the age of twenty eight, Bill had a debilitating accident resulting in a severe spinal chord injury. As a consequence he lost the use of his legs and became reliant on a wheelchair to get from A to B. After a recovery and rehabilitation period of over fourteen months, Bill returned to the corporate bank where he had already established good contacts and relationships from working for top managers and senior executives.

"There was a great attraction to going back to an employer where you knew the work

and the people.” However he did face some prejudice as a disabled person, but this only made him more determined to achieve the high goals he was brought up to expect.

Since returning to his work, as a disabled person, Bill has been promoted four times. At the time of interview he was working as a Trade Finance Advisor for the bank, advising multi-nationals and corporates. He also is the transactional advisor for other branches of the company in the U.K. and overseas. Bill has worked for his current employers for twenty five years.

Barry - Senior Architect

Barry, the only son and eldest child of a Lieutenant Navy Commander, was brought up to be ambitious and appreciate the value of education. *“I was doing trigonometry when I was 5!”*

As a result of his father becoming very ill, Barry had the primary responsibility, in his teen years, of taking care of his family.

Educated at grammar school, Barry went on to university to do a degree in Law. *“I never did want to go into law, I always wanted to be a chef and I wanted to work on the QE2, but my dad, being Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy, knew what navy life was like and told me to do law instead, and in those days you did what your father told you to do.”*

Having graduated Barry continued studying to become a barrister, although this was cut short as a consequence of falling twenty feet and breaking his back. The recovery and rehabilitation process took a while, and he had to adjust to a different life; a life using a wheelchair. Furthermore, he was forced to give up his career in law.

“Following my accident, I couldn’t return to law because the courts were then too inaccessible.” So life was tough for Barry who, after his accident, spent a while on benefits and very close to the poverty line. However the support of his wife and daughter kept him going. *“If it wasn’t for them, I think I would have attempted my second suicide and been successful.”*

Barry became bloody minded and determined as a consequence of his accident and the societal prejudice he encountered as a disabled person, and decided to pursue a career in architecture. This was difficult in itself as, after getting a diploma, he found that architectural practices were hesitant to employ disabled architects as it was not known what they could offer. *“They can’t understand how someone can go on a building site using a wheelchair”*. So, Barry decided to set up his own practice, as a sole practitioner, working from home with the County Council and community Occupational Therapists. After three years he went into partnership and set up a private practice specialising in doing work for/with people with disabilities. Since then he has been awarded a M.B.E for his work. He is also joint senior partner in three private practices and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Architects.

Priyesh - Computer Programmer and Analyst

Priyesh, the middle child of three, was brought up in a close-knit Indian family where it was important to work hard, get a good education and a respectable job.

Since the age of fourteen Priyesh had always wanted to work with computers, ambitious to become a Computer Engineer. So he selected his education accordingly, doing Computer Science as one of his A’Levels and degree subjects.

At the age of eighteen, Priyesh had a paralysing accident that resulted in him becoming disabled with tetraplegia, a condition causing severe damage to his spine from the neck down. With limited movement in his upper limbs, Priyesh had to re-think his original career ambitions. After a year of applying for jobs and persevering through several encounters of disability discrimination in the workplace he got a job as a Computer Programmer and Analyst with British Telecom. However once he had become employed, Priyesh still had to overcome several other obstacles. *"I work in the city of London so I have to use a black cab everyday. It took a while to get a grant to pay for that. Another thing is sorting out some sort of assistance while I am at work to help at lunch time with feeding, using the bathroom facilitates etc."* Furthermore, Priyesh had to work twice as hard to get promoted as his non-disabled colleagues. However over the six years he has worked for British Telecom he has got more responsibility, in terms of managing his own team, leading meetings and making managerial decisions.

Fadul - Barrister

Fadul was born and brought up in a large but close knit Muslim family in Sudan. His father, a Local Authority Official, believed it was important to get a good education to get a respectable job. Fadul had a good schooling and aspired to become a physician. But at the age of seventeen he had an accident that left him severally injured and unable to walk. *"In a third world country you have two occupational choices, either be a doctor or a soldier. I knew I could not be a soldier. But my brother told me that my disability will deprive me from being a doctor so the best thing to do was to join the legal profession."*

Fadul took an extra year to get the qualifications he needed to study law at university. He qualified as a barrister in 1986 when he started working for the Ministry of Justice, work as draftsman, specialising in the drafting of laws and relations, decisions of the government or of the institutions in general. He also works as a translator, translating from Arabic to English and visa versa.

Stephen - University Professor

Born in 1942, during World War II, Stephen was the oldest of four children. His parents were both Oxford graduates and emphasised the value of education to their children. Stephen's father, a doctor in tropical medicine, spent much time travelling and, on several occasions, took his family with him. Thus Stephen changed schools several times. He was always average at school, never more than half way up the class. *"But my classmates gave me the nickname Einstein so presumably they saw signs of something better."*

Although Stephen's father was ambitious for him to do medicine, Stephen had no interest in biology, but from the age of thirteen he knew he wanted to do research in physics. At the age of fifteen Stephen gained a scholarship for Oxford University, and two years later he started at Oxford University to study Physics. He graduated with a first class degree that got him a place at Cambridge University to do a PhD in Cosmology.

During his final year at Oxford, Stephen noticed he was becoming clumsy in his movements. Soon after he went to Cambridge he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease which, at first, progressed quite rapidly. At this point Stephen did not see the point in continuing with his PhD, but eventually the disease slowed down.

Having finished his PhD Stephen applied for and got a research fellowship at Caius College. This meant he could marry a girl he had met in his first year at Cambridge. After this he got a series of contracts doing research without the lecturing as although he was becoming more of an acknowledged world expert in Physics, his disability was getting worse. He is now a professor at Cambridge University, uses an electric wheelchair to get around, and communicates via computer speech synthesis.

Nigel - Management Accountant

The youngest and the only boy of four children, Nigel was expected to do well, and he was sent to a private boarding school where expectations were high.

In 1982 Nigel had a car accident which paralysed him from the waist down so he had to use a wheelchair to get around. It also caused him a lot pain. *“The pain I suffer from my impairment has stilted my ability to fulfil my desires of achievement”*.

In 1987 he graduated from university with a degree in Economics which was a definite prerequisite to the career he wanted to pursue. From 1987-89 he stayed at home to look after his children while his wife worked.

He got a job with British Gas as a graduate trainee and worked his way up the ladder for four and a half years, as a management accountant. Commuting from Nottingham to Leicestershire every day was becoming tiring and affecting his health so he got his current job as Management Accountant at Nottingham University.

Damien - Education and Training Officer

The only daughter, third and youngest child of supportive parents, Damien was always encouraged to do things she wanted to. Her passion for visual art was greatly influenced by her family background. *“Both my cousins are visual artists so they are*

a big inspiration. My oldest cousin is about ten years older than me so the age gap has sort of driven me to put him on a pedestal, looking up to him, I wanted to be like him."

During the second year of her A'Levels, at age seventeen, Damien became profoundly deaf and had to depend on a communication support worker. As a result of her deafness, the last six months of her A'Levels were taught on a one-to-one basis. She then went to university where she worked hard and overcame various disabling obstacles to achieve her goals. *"There were things like the lecturer chewing gum so I could not lip read, and not being allowed to use the equipment, especially in the wood workshop. I was told I was a health and safety risk because they assumed I couldn't hear the equipment, although I could see it and feel it."* Despite several encounters of attitudinal prejudice from staff and students, Damien qualified with a BA(Hons) in Fine Art.

After having several short contracts Damien got an Arts Council Traineeship which was the pivotal job in her career. *"Without that I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now."* Following this she got the post of Assistant Co-ordinator for the Arts Council apprentice scheme. She then moved up the ladder to become Co-ordinator of the apprentice scheme. The contract was originally for three months, but was then extended to one year. Now she is on a fixed term part-time contract working to assist disabled people find work within the arts and ensure they are facilitated to progress to the same level as their non-disabled counterparts. She also is responsible for educating arts organisations about employing disabled people. However Damien also is a practising visual artist so works in her studio for two days a week.

Liz - Project Manager

The older of two sisters, Liz was a shy child. She didn't have much ambition but was brought up in a supportive loving environment with parents who, although not ambitious, encouraged her to do well in whatever she chose to do.

Liz had a successful education, achieving good A'Levels and then going on to university to do a degree in European History with German. Unfortunately during her final year at university she developed a disability effecting her mobility and stamina. It also influenced the way people treated her.

As a newly disabled person Liz was unsure if she could work and did, in fact, experience discrimination when trying to find a job. *"At a job interview no one mentions the disability factor, and you just know they are wondering how you are going to do the job."*

In September 1996 Liz got her first job with the Learning From Experience Trust, a small independent educational charity. After two years she progressed to Project Manager. Now her role involves researching, writing, testing, distributing and marketing a 'Learning from Experience counterpack', a pack for people with disabilities, to help them see what they have achieved in their lives.

Celeste - Artistic Director/Performer of Candoco Dance Company

The youngest child of four, Celeste spent much of her childhood travelling with her family. *"With my father in the Air Force, we did travel quite a bit. We lived in Singapore and in Libya."* She grew up in a family with a great love of music, theatre and dance. Her mother was a dancer in her former years and was keen for Celeste to follow in her footsteps and sent her to dance classes at the age of three. *"My mother*

sent me to dancing school when I was 3 and it was something I just took to, like a duck to water. I was always very serious about it, it wasn't just like a bit of fun."

By the age of sixteen Celeste knew she wanted to be a professional dancer.

Celeste went to a convent boarding school in Singapore, and got six O-Levels out of nine. She left school at sixteen and went straight to London Contemporary Dance School where she spent three years training to become a professional dancer. From there she joined London Contemporary Dance Theatre. But after three years, Celeste's career was cut short by a debilitating accident that caused severe paralysis. She became dependent on a wheelchair and Personal Assistants to help with daily living. She was twenty-two years old.

Celeste spent sixteen years adapting to her new life, not knowing what she could or would be able to do. But in 1990 she was asked to dance in a film for the Ten by Ten Series on BBC2. *"During rehearsals and stuff, and I found ways to move which didn't parody able-bodied dancers, it was movement very particular to me, I was expressing a very different kind of language really, but it was based on the knowledge I had before."*

Having her talents exposed on national television was a significant turning point for Celeste and the start of a successful career. She teamed up with an arts graduate and started teaching integrated dance classes. The classes become more and more popular, and soon they were invited to perform and conduct workshops for various groups. From there, a team of seven dancers (four non-disabled and three wheelchair users) were selected to form Candoco, the first professional integrated dance company in the world. Candoco produce, perform and tour their own work internationally. As well as being Artistic Director, Celeste is also one of the dancers of the company. *"My career has certainly progressed. I never thought I would be an artistic director!"*

6.1:- Theme 1: Career Choice, Progression and Turning points

Introduction

The evidence revealed that although several respondents arrived at their current occupational position by following 'education-related' paths of progression, many took more 'individualised' routes. According to this thesis, 'education-related' career progression involved the respondents taking specialist training and qualifications, entering an occupation in that field, and undergoing several promotions to reach their current status. Analysis of the disabled high-flyers' work histories offered clues for understanding why some of them chose to pursue more 'individualised' career paths which were flexible and dynamic and less dependent on a traditional bureaucratic structure. The 'individualised' approach involved respondents working hard to seek out opportunities and capitalise on them, or ensuring they were in the right place at the right time to take advantage of a situation or event that would be important to their career progression and success. Furthermore with this pattern there is no obvious connection between prior educational training and current occupation.

The stories of the high-flyers' career development uncovered the external barriers they encountered during their climb to meet their occupational goals and the significant turning points which, as Strauss (1962) maintains, caused them to take stock, to re-evaluate, revise, resee and rejudge their life. These turning points were considered to be significant to the respondents' current occupational position. Sometimes turning points were, as Hodkinson and Sparks (1997) pointed out, forced

onto some people by external events. These were connected to the respondents' impairments that caused certain diversions or re-orientations. However for others, turning points involved simply getting a job, watching a play, or meeting a significant other, and were not influenced by their impairment.

The evidence did reveal that disability certainly had an impact, although of varying degrees, on the career development of several of the disabled high-flyers. It was sometimes perceived to be a critical determinant in terms of informing the career choice, aspirations and development of the respondents. However the interview discourse revealed that there was a significant difference in the extent to which disability affected the life cycle of individuals with acquired impairments and those with birth/post birth impairments. As Priestley (1998) contends, children/adults with congenital disabilities may be excluded from important social processes through different mechanisms of medicalisation, and administrative segregation. Furthermore if a disabled child is raised in an over protective environment where independence is not encouraged and they are not challenged, the child will probably evolve into the stereotypical disabled person i.e. passive and dependent.

Sutherland (1981) argues that this is the difference between children with congenital disabilities and those who have acquired disabilities in adult life. The latter often have much more power in terms of money, legal status, position in the social structure and experiences in dealing with encounters with other people, all of which makes it easier for them to reject attempts made to coerce them into conforming to a stereotypical role. On the other hand, it may be suggested, from the research evidence as well as the researcher's own experience, that people with a congenital disability have "grown up

with it", know their abilities and limitations well, and try to overcome them. Furthermore, when the child is nurtured within a family who challenges them and treats them as normally as possible, the child is more likely to stretch to meet their expectations (Thomas, 1998). People with acquired disabilities (especially when the change has been sudden, e.g. traffic accident) usually have two serious opponents to overcome - anxiety and psychological problems first, and lack of relevant knowledge about their 'new' situation second.

The intention of this section is to examine the various routes the respondents took to achieve their career success. The analysis of work histories identified three different patterns of career progression experienced by the high-flyers:

Education-related career progression - a pattern where there is a direct connection between education and work (i.e. people enter an occupation after taking specialist training and qualifications), and a tendency to be promoted in a specialised field with minimal, if any, geographical mobility.

Individualised career progression - a flexible and dynamic career path composed of series of challenging jobs with no obvious connection to previous educational training. Such a pattern of career progression is facilitated by the ability to manage one's own time, and seek out and capitalise on new opportunities to progress. Evidence indicated that some respondents could not pursue their initial career choice. Instead they followed a career path totally unrelated to the field for which they originally studied and became qualified. This was due to a number of reasons, not all disability-related.

Re-directed career progression - the pursuit of a completely different career route as a result of external life events, the actions of others, or personal decisions. For

instance an army officer may be prevented from moving up the career ladder after a disabling accident, thus may choose to pursue a different career which offers him/her opportunities for promotion. However once the career path had been redirected, it would continue to follow either an education-related or individualised pattern of career progression.

The number of respondents who followed either career path can be seen in the table 6.1 below. As indicated by the table, the career paths followed by some of the respondents may fall into more than one of the categories. For example, one of the men in the sample was forced to redirect his former education-related career path in law, after a disabling accident. However his re-directed career in architecture also followed an education-related pattern of progression as it was directly related to specialised training and qualifications obtained prior to starting work.

Table 6.1: Career Patterns & Decisions followed by Disabled High-flyers

Respondent Group	Education-related Progression	Individualised Progression	Redirected Progression
M/A¹	8	0	2
M/C²	4	6	4
F/A³	2	1	0
F/C⁴	5	4	1
TOTAL	19	11	7

¹Males with acquired disabilities = 8

²Males with congenital disabilities = 11

³Females with acquired disabilities = 3

⁴Females with congenital disabilities = 9

6.1.1 Education-related Career Progression

Content analysis of the respondents' work histories engendered discourse to suggest that nineteen members of the sample group followed relatively 'education-related' career paths, entering their occupations after taking qualifications in a related subject,

and experiencing the opportunity to move further by specialising or applying for promotion. Several of these respondents advanced in their career without necessarily moving employer. As table 6.1 indicates, these respondents were men or women and had a congenital or acquired disability. The impact that gender and disability had, or did not have, on the respondents' career progression will be discussed later in the section.

Four men with congenital disabilities entered their career after undertaking educational training in the same field. One of these men was Peter (Senior Computer Analyst), a man who remained loyal to his employer for 8 or 9 years, entering his occupation immediately after graduating with a Computer Science degree:

"I have done this job for a number of years, about 8 or 9 years, more or less doing the same job but the responsibilities have got stronger and harder. Before that I was at university from where I graduated with a 2.1 (Hons) degree in Computer Science. So this was my first job, and basically I have stayed."

He identifies a significant milestone as qualifying for the role of certified Microsoft Systems Engineer, an industry recognised qualification which, as he says:

"...will give me the opportunity to move within the company and within the industry. It just gives you freedom to go on the market."

Gordon, a financial planner, followed a similar career pattern. After graduating from university with a degree in Economics and Accounting, he did four years professional training with an accounting firm, then decided to specialise:

"...because of a change in the legislation in this country which was defining more closely the roles of a chartered accountant and that of a financial advisor",

after which he started working as a financial advisor for another accounting firm. He started this job in 1987 and was still in their employ in 1998 (at the time of the research interview.) As he states:

“in my working career I have only ever had two employers, two jobs.”

Although Gordon realised that this did not give him the wide experience he required, and would prevent him from climbing up the occupational hierarchy at the same pace as his non-disabled colleagues, he considered it more practical for him, as a disabled person, to remain with the same employer:

“I think it's quite important that everybody in the organisation can get to every other part of the office, can get to see everybody, can get to do things and don't have to rely on other people always to come to you because steps get in the way. This is important, particularly with the sort of job I have got at the moment. Most of the companies are very small, less than ten people. Most of them operate from first and second floors in old office buildings with no lifts, steps up to the doors and so on, so it would be very difficult for me to move within the industry to another company. Therefore, unlike a lot of people, I can't keep changing jobs to get wider experience. So the physical limitations, projected as a result of disability, is that you are very limited as to how often you can change jobs.”

All of the men with acquired disabilities followed ‘education-related’ career paths. Bill (Trade Finance Advisor) has been employed by the same company for 25 years, ever since leaving university from where he graduated with a BSc(Hons) degree in International Economics:

“At the age of twenty one I applied to work for my present employers, which is twenty five years ago now, with a view to gaining a few years international

experience. But in the early years every time I thought about moving they made me an offer of promotion I couldn't refuse. Since then I've been promoted four times."

Similarly, Priyesh, a Computer Science graduate, joined his company to work as a Computer Programmer and Analyst, which he claimed to be a major turning point:

"At the time I was looking, there was a recession so it was hard enough to find a job and harder still if you are disabled...I only have ever had one job, working for BT. I joined them a year after leaving university, and have been there 6 years now.

After a couple of years of being employed with BT I started to get a lot more responsibility in terms of doing more project management type work, becoming team leader. The next turning point was last year when I got a promotion."

Stephen, a University Professor, spent many years of hard work and determination working to achieve the next goal in his academic career. However his career path was not altogether smooth as was evidenced in his biographical discourse, *Black Holes & Baby Universes*. Stephen mentioned a few major turning points he experienced during his career development. For instance, he identifies a major one to be his viva examination for his undergraduate degree, which determined whether he would graduate with a first class or second class degree which, in turn would influence the subject of PhD research and where it was to be conducted. But when Stephen learned he had the deteriorating condition Motor Neurone Disease he became apathetic and contemplated not finishing his PhD, not expecting to live long enough anyway. However this was before the second major turning point, as he explains:

"I got engaged to a girl, whom I had met about the time I was diagnosed with A.L.S (motor neurone disease). This gave me something to live for. If we were to get married I had to get a job, and to get a job I had to finish my PhD."

Caroline was one of the five women with a congenital disability who followed a career path which can be described 'education-related', as she entered her professional role of Speech and Language Therapist after qualifying with a degree in Speech and Language Therapy. Although she worked in this field for many years, her role has become more specialised since getting a post as clinician. She considered this to be a major turning point in her career.

Annalu, the university lecturer, followed a similar career pattern. After graduating with a university degree in Computer Science, and failing to get a job in a related field, she went on to do a MSc and then a PhD that opened doors to the field of research and academia. Before getting a full-time lectureship at Dundee University in 1997 she worked in research for some years:

"In 1992 I was appointed as a research assistant to carry on with my PhD research. Since then I have had several short term contracts until last year when I got a permanent lectureship."

Although it could be argued that this is a conventional pattern of career development for anyone working in the academic field, Annalu felt that her disability instigated some prejudice for her when trying to get a permanent contract as a lecturer. Even though she did not encounter any negative prejudice in her department at Dundee University, having proven her abilities which, in time, served to override her disabilities, it was always a challenge when she was looking for work elsewhere:

"There have been a lot of negative hurdles which I have had to jump over along the way. People have denied me access to things because of my disability. As soon as I go out of the department it's always been a matter of proving myself every time."

Damien, an education and training development officer, who acquired a hearing impairment before going to university believed her education has proved to be positively influential to her current occupation in the arts. Thus her career progression can be described as 'education-related':

"Definitely my education at a higher level has all been connected to the visual arts and I use that such a lot now. But I think people who work in the arts have these all-over-the-place sort of careers. You do one thing then you do something else, thought of as portfolio careers. I think people who work in the arts tend to work over a broader spectrum than, perhaps, people in different industries who specialise more. I've probably specialised at a later stage in my life. I've kept my hand in with the visual arts: I'm a visual arts assessor for the London Arts Board."

After university Damien worked on several arts projects, but claims the major turning point was her work as an Arts Council trainee:

"This was the pivotal job in my career, the one that got my foot in the door. Without that I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now."

6.1.2 Individualised Career Progression

Eleven of the respondents achieved their success by following career routes not directly related to their previous education and training, but rather, formulated by a series of challenging jobs. Furthermore, they considered their progression to be determined by being in the right place at the right time to seek out and take advantage

of opportunities as and when they presented themselves, and by certain events and life changing experiences that served to be significant to their career progression.

Out of the eleven respondents who followed such a 'individualised' pattern of career progression, ten had a congenital disability. One of these was Nabil, who graduated with a university degree in Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology but, from a child, had always wanted to be an actor. However he believed disability discrimination had prevented him from going to drama school to acquire specialist training and qualifications:

"I did a degree in Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology which has nothing to do with acting."

The denied opportunity to undertake specialist training and qualifications in acting meant he had to follow an individualised career path, and one that he had created himself, which was facilitated by a combination of hard work to seek out opportunities, perseverance, luck and timing. According to Nabil:

"...drama schools didn't accept disabled people. When I was a kid, they didn't. I wrote to drama schools up and down the country and every one told me to get lost, 'you're a cripple, you're in a wheelchair'. I didn't get to become an actor until I was 27. So it basically took me about 12 years to achieve my childhood ambition. I had to do it unconventionally. The only way it could be done, at that time, was to create a theatre company of disabled people, write your own shows, perform them and hope other people will be interested in what we were doing and see what we were capable of."

Nabil believed 1981 to be significant to his career progression because, being the International Year of Disabled People, it proved to be a good time to launch and

publicise his theatre company, Graeae. His work at Graeae was, not only considered to be a self-initiated turning point, but also the start of a successful acting career for him:

“Since then, I worked in stage plays like playing Hamlet in Hamlet, Jesus in Godspell, Ayatollah Khomeini at The Royal Court. Then there’s been television, Dr Who, Raspberry Ripple and a few other small dramas, a Channel 4 production called Death of Graffiti in which I had the leading role.”

Similarly, Dean, who graduated with an upper second class degree in Communication Studies, followed an individualised career pattern. He decided to combine his personal interest with his professional interest, as he states:

“My work is also part of my private life. I spend about 75% of my time in work or in work-related activities. I’m in the type of work where my paid employment can and does overlap with the work I do voluntarily.”

He achieved his professional position as Boccia Development Officer for Scope by working in a number of unrelated jobs, and being influenced by a number of life events which triggered certain changes:

“After university, I went into a two year training program called Fast Track which was pretty good but I soon found out it wasn’t for me. It gave me certain skills and work experience, but I just didn’t seem to get on so I quit after 6 months. I then was out of work for 6 months and then was offered a post with the Local Authority as a Disability Sports Development Officer. But it got a little frustrating as the post didn’t demand enough responsibility. Also there were various issues concerning physical access around the work place which caused some distress because the offices that we used were located in such a place which meant that I only had access

to my own office and no other part of the building. This restricted me for playing a full part in my department. And then I applied for my current job as a Boccia Development Officer.”

One of the other six men, Mick, a TV presenter, began his career as a consequence of luck and being in the right place at the right time:

“I got spotted by a talent scout from Thames TV who asked if I would like to do a screen test for a show. I ended up presenting Beat That, a children’s show on Channel 4 twice a week.”

According to this thesis, Mick’s career followed an individualised pattern of progression, but he claims:

“my career was progressing down a conventional route for television: i.e. start off doing bits and bobs, do a children’s series on Channel 4 and then a children’s series on BBC1”

However, this was stopped as a result of bad press, proving to be a significant turning point in his career:

“I got a children’s show on BBC1, The Poetry Show. At the same time I started my band, Eroticisis, a sexy pop act. But the Daily Mail got hold of the fact I was in a fetish band, going to fetish clubs and also presenting children’s television, so they printed something that implied the BBC had employed a pervert to work with children. That incident stopped my career from going further.”

After that Mick grabbed what opportunities came his way, using his disability to get him more work so he could be seen and get his mainstream career back on track. He took advantage of the fact that the TV industry has cycles of disability programmes that offered him potential work opportunities:

"I got picked up on the first cycle of disability. Then they went off disability for a year. Then they included it again, hence "Beat That" which I presented, and 'Wam Bam Strawberry Jam' which I was picked for. So the television industry goes in cycles and I think, by the end of next year, disabled actors are going to be employed more and more by the BBC. So suddenly people with disabilities get a chance to move up a step. Once you are on the inside and know when these opportunities are going to occur, you can grab them."

As table 6.1 indicates, four women with a congenital disability took an individualised career route to reach their professional goals. One example is the case of a freelance journalist, Annie, who attempted to follow an education-related pattern of career progression, starting with a postgraduate diploma in journalism. However, she was driven to revise her career route, by negative reactions towards her disability:

"I did English at university and went on to do a postgraduate diploma in Journalism Studies at Cardiff University. But I left that early due to encountering overt prejudice. On a number of occasions I was told I wasn't suited as a journalist because I was disabled but I could be a sub-editor which involved sitting in the office editing other people's work. The tutors basically did things to prove their theory that I couldn't keep up. So they worked me as hard, and for as many hours as possible until I cracked."

So she pursued her career aspirations via a more individualised route, gaining entrance to her career by perseverance, hard work, seeking out and capitalising on opportunities when they presented themselves. Annie confirms that her career started making great progress after getting a job with a local newspaper, the Trader, in

Loughborough, where she worked for 6 years, first as reporter and then as editor. She claims this to be a major turning point in her career which, she asserts:

“...has progressed by me being opportunistic - grabbing opportunities when I see them, and just going for what I want and don't let anyone stand in my way.”

Two other women chose not to enter or pursue a career in the field in which they had been trained and qualified. Instead they decided to enter a completely different field and progress via individualised career routes. As Mandy, the Associate Director of Graeae Theatre Company, comments:

“I had no plans to go into a career in the arts. I was trained as a sociologist, contemplating social work, welfare rights, that kind of thing. When I left college I applied for a part-time job, simply because the advert said 'disabled people welcome to apply', 'cos I hadn't worked up to then at all, so I thought a part-time job would be good to see how I'd manage, and 'cos the advert said 'disabled people welcome to apply', I thought at least I would get an interview. It was for a job-share post, to co-run an arts project involving disabled people. That was a major turning point.”

Similarly Alice (Disability Strategy Manager), expressed how her initial degree qualifications did not provide her with any realistic career openings:

“I did a degree in language which was kind of linguistics, it's a bit like a philosophy degree so it didn't prepare me for anything in working terms.”

So she followed an individualised career path, working in a series of challenging jobs, unrelated to previous education, but climbing up the status ladder with each job.

Progression was facilitated by a series of turning points. One big one was redundancy:

“Although being made redundant was a disaster for us (me and my husband), having a large mortgage hanging around our necks, it was quite positive thing because it meant I got the Rail Track job.”

Liz, the project manager for a charity based at Essex University, acquired her impairment during the final year of her university education. She did not have an exact career plan, even before becoming disabled:

“Before my disability developed I didn’t know what I wanted to do after university. A possible option was to take a year out to travel and work it out. I thought about working on a cruise ship for a while.”

She followed an individualised pattern of career progression as her line of work was completely unrelated to her education. As she claims:

“My career development wasn’t very conventional in terms of knowing what I wanted to do before I graduated and pursuing that as a career.

My career history consists of working for Braintree Council, and this one. There are no real similarities.”

Celeste, the Artistic Director and dancer of an international integrated dance company, achieved her professional position via a partially individualised career path. Although her career as a dancer started via educational training in the same field, it stopped rather abruptly as a consequence of a paralysing accident, noted as a significant turning point in the respondent’s professional life. As she recalls:

“I went to the London Dance College. I went to the London Contemporary Dance School as soon as I left school, from when I was sixteen till nineteen then I joined a

dance company. At the age of 22 I had an accident, so it was a very short career.

Candoco started in 1991. From the end of 1973 to 1990 I didn't do anything."

It was not an option to continue along the same career route after the acquisition of her impairment. As a newly disabled person, Celeste was presented with two possible alternatives: 1. To change her career altogether, or 2. To find another way of achieving success in her original career. She explains:

"For many years after my accident I did not partake in dance at all. Sixteen years later I was asked to dance in a film, on BBC2, for the Ten By Ten series, by a well known choreographer and director. That was the beginning of it all."

So this was a significant turning point in her life, giving her the confidence to try dancing again, and take a more individualised career path where development is facilitated by an individual responsibility to seek out and build on new opportunities such as:

"...meeting a guy who has been my co-artistic director until just recently. We started teaching at an integrated sports centre giving disabled people the opportunity to do something other than sport that was the only thing on offer.

From there, the company grew and my career certainly progressed. I never thought I would be an artistic director for Candoco, the only professional integrated dance company around at the moment."

So Celeste's career path was formulated by a series of turning points, the luck of meeting the right people and being in the right place at the right time. As she reflects:

"I think my former co-artistic director was a great influence because, after I had worked on the film, he was the one who really convinced me that this is what I should be doing and he couldn't do it on his own. And together we were a good team, he was able-bodied, I was disabled, and we came from different backgrounds,

we had different skills, and I think he was very inspiring. So it was lucky meeting him and lucky meeting the people we met on various workshops who are now in the company.”

6.1.3 Redirected career progression

Seven of the respondents had followed redirected career patterns. There were many reasons why they re-orientated their original career, both internal and external to the individual. They included the result of a single event, or a religious calling, or issues surrounding disability. For example, Mat, previously a drummer in a Rock & Roll band, re-directed his career as a result of ‘coming out’ as a disabled person. He explains:

“I decided to be a drummer behind a drum-kit rather than be at the front of the stage singing because I had plenty of ego to push me to the front of the stage, but it was the realisation that people would look at me as a freak that pushed me to the back of the stage. But the disability stuff hit in 1992, the new reclaimed ‘I’m disabled and proud’ attitude, culminated with my interest in acting.”

He identifies one particular event as a major turning point in his professional life:

“ I saw a Graeae production, Booboo, that totally blew my head off, because I had never seen disabled people perform before. I suddenly realised that I could do what I really wanted to do all along which was act! So I slowly moved out of mainstream music, and I auditioned for Graeae and trained up as an actor for 3 years!”

So, for Mat, Graeae was the principal turning point in his life not only in terms of cultivating his professional potential as an actor, but also helping him to accept a component part of his self-concept, his disability.

Two other men were forced to re-think about their professional future after acquiring a physical impairment. They both were confronted with disability in their adult years, after being educated and/or trained for a specific occupation as a non-disabled person. This can be exemplified by a comment made by Barry, who, in his former life, was trained in law, but now has a successful profession as a senior architect:

“I wanted to be a barrister. But following my accident, I couldn’t return to law because the courts were then too inaccessible. So I went into architecture”

Likewise Tony, now retired from his full-time occupation of careers officer, specialising in advising disabled young school leavers of their post-school options, asserted:

“Before my illness, I wanted to go into the navy. I wanted to be physically active, I wanted to go into the officers’ training school in Dartmoor. I had a job with, or training with, the public schools and university’s branch of the Royal Navy volunteer reserves. It all just disappeared - went down the plug hole as it were! So I re-orientated my dreams; I had to.”

Although Dave’s disability did influence his career change, it was more the internal feeling of boredom together with his decision to do something about it, that changed his professional status from Postman to that of Dancer:

“I was an indoor postman for 9 years, but by the end of 9 years, I really needed to do something very very different. This feeling of boredom inspired me to go to a Candoco dance workshop, not with any view to take it up as a career, but as something that was going to break up my week. One thing led to another and, after a couple of months I was invited to join the company, Candoco. So I left the Post Office, joined the dance company and it went from there really.”

Hazel's first career started after she achieved a Masters degree in Information Technology but underwent a severe career change, not as a result of her disability but by being called to serve God:

"it wasn't my original career, I used to teach information technology so I made a change as well. I've been involved in training and practising for ten years now."

However Hazel did undergo a period of educational training before becoming a vicar, therefore once again following an education-related pattern of career progression.

John and Craig told similar stories as they also re-oriented their careers as a result of a religious calling to work for the church. This calling was considered to be a major turning point for both of them, causing them to redirect their career route completely.

As John asserts:

"I thoroughly enjoyed my consultancy work. I was a disability trainer. I loved it, had a good reputation and good pay. But I went into the church because I felt it was where God wanted me to go."

Likewise, Craig, a Baptist Minister, graduated from university as an Economist but having worked in that occupation for two years, recognised his calling and, as a result, changed his career path and what he conceptualised as a career:

"My idea of a career path has changed and it's got something to do with the work I am doing. I used to think of a career in terms of business. But that evaporated at the same time that I recognised this was what I was called to do."

Like Hazel, both Craig and John's career path could be described as being 'education-related', as defined by this thesis, because after recognising their calling they

underwent specialist educational training which provided a key to work with the Church.

6.1.4 Impact of disability and gender on career progression

The stories reveal that disability did not always influence the respondents' decisions to follow certain patterns of career progression. At times the ways in which the disabled high-flyers perceived their careers to have developed were no different to what is known about how the careers of non-disabled high-flyers, in the same field, develop. For example, the three vicars in the sample had to redirect their original career as the result of a religious calling.

However, issues surrounding disability did, in fact, influence a number of the respondents following education-related patterns of career progression (as defined above) to stay with one employer for several years. Although this is not regarded as conventional for non-disabled high-flyers, who are more likely to move job and employer to progress in their career, it is different for disabled workers who are more inclined to stay with one employer longer for purposes of convenience and ease. As discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.4, the services and resources required by many disabled people often impede successful employer transitions or job moves.

The evidence above also suggests that disability did have an impact on the different patterns of career progression followed by respondents. It shows how the respondents with acquired impairments were more likely to pursue traditional patterns of career progression (i.e. enter a career directly related to prior educational training) than those with congenital impairments. It is possible that this may be influenced by two factors.

Firstly, the former group had a non-disabled childhood where parental expectations of them were high and they were encouraged to achieve to a high standard and, at times, were directed towards particular goals. This was unlike the respondents with congenital disabilities who, as disabled children, were not exposed to the same standard of expectations due to parents being unsure of how their child's disability would evolve and thus what they would be permitted to achieve (as discussed in section 6.2 of this chapter). The second factor is that the respondents with acquired impairments attended mainstream educational institutions with a wider range of subjects, whereas several individuals with congenital impairments went to segregated schools and/or colleges where the curriculum and teaching expertise was limited (see section 6.3 of this chapter). As a consequence some of them studied the subjects that were available as opposed to subjects related to their preferable career choice.

On several occasions, respondents perceived their disability as beneficial to their career development. Twelve of the twenty respondents with congenital disabilities currently work or have worked in areas focusing on disability. However only a few were actually employed by disability organisations or institutions, such as Scope and the Muscular Dystrophy Group. Most of these twelve respondents were employed in disability-related work roles in mainstream organisations. For example, Alice is employed by Rail Track as Disability Strategy Manager, and has the responsibility of ensuring that the rail network is accessible to disabled people. Her role within the Rail Track is considered to be very important, because, as she explains:

“Although they have already been doing stuff around disability, it has been quite fragmented and they haven't really known what they were doing essentially. So they

wanted somebody to come and pull it together and also have the outside contact with disabled people.”

The whole concept of having a disability focus within mainstream organisations can also be exemplified by Tanni’s work situation. As well as being a professional wheelchair athlete, Tanni is employed by the British Athletic Federation to work with disabled people with an interest in athletics:

“I manage a project called B T Athletics which is about working with disabled people to get them involved in athletics...”

Although these disabled professionals had no real preference of whether to work in the mainstream or disability sector, a few of them perceived their disability as an asset to their current career success. As Kevin, a Parliamentary Officer, states:

“I work for a disability charity, not because it’s a soft option but I can use my experiences, frustrations and persecutions to help other disabled people.”

Another example of disability being more of a help than a hindrance in an employment situation is demonstrated through the experiences of Dave, who considered his disability to be an important determinant of his career development and advancement as he reveals:

“I’m a dancer in an integrated dance company, Candoco, which is made up of 7 dancers at this present time: 4 able-bodied dancers and 3 who use wheelchairs. When I started dancing, my disability proved to be a major advantage. In the last 6-7 years, we have developed a new style of dance and vocabulary which has proved rather successful. If I hadn’t the disability that I have, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing in the style that I’m doing it in. So my disability has worked in my favour.”

A small number of respondents who had acquired a disability also saw it as a causal factor in their professional success. For Barry, the architect, acquiring a disability not only forced him to change careers, but also increased his professional position in society:

“Had I not had my accident, I would have probably stayed in law and gone to the bar and would have been a very junior barrister doing things like probate. But since I couldn’t physically return to law after my accident, I went into architecture. Now I’m joint senior partner in three private practices, one of which is a limited company.”

Further, through his work as an architect with/for people with disabilities he earned one of his most prized achievements:

“being given an MBE by the Queen”

Barry also recognised that being mobility impaired had ignited latent personality traits such as determination that encouraged him to learn skills that have been beneficial to his career development. He feels that he would not have considered attempting to pursue these in his former life as a non-disabled person:

“I do things now that I would never have done, like learning to drive a car. I would never have done that. My disability caused me to learn purely for mobility reasons, to get from A to B. I probably would never have flown if I hadn’t become disabled. Since my accident I have flown to most parts of Europe to lecture.”

Ewan also considered his disability to be a positive influence to his high-flying status. Prior to the acquisition of his disability, he was keen to pursue a career in acting. However, after his accident, he became more and more interested in directing which, he thinks:

“ may have been influenced by practicality a bit, it's probably easier to do as my physical impairment is not in the way of me directing.”

Further Ewan's disability served to promote his suitability for a job with a theatre company for and run by disabled people. He identifies his work with the company, Graeae, as a significant turning point in his career:

“it gave me a possible career opportunity and influenced what I thought about politics, personal politics and confidence.”

It may be argued that, in order to break free from the web of dependency, people with disabilities feel they must work harder than their non-disabled counterparts to gain the key to mainstream society and become autonomous and thus become accepted. One can suggest that, together with disability come latent personality traits that are regarded as essential in order to survive in a mainstream society. Several respondents identified disability as making a positive contribution to their career success in terms of their determination and drive to achieve. Damien speculates:

“I wonder if I would have fought so hard for what I've got if I hadn't been deaf...I'm very stubborn, if people tell me I can't do something I just say 'watch me' and go and do it”.

Similarly, Priyesh asserts:

“Although people don't admit they are being prejudiced, it is almost subconscious to a certain extent so, you have to be determined and you have to work harder just to prove that you are as good as anybody else.”

No significant gender differences were identified from the respondents' stories of their career progression. Although they all spoke of important life events and people

that had a major influence on their career choices and patterns of development, gender was not highlighted as being a factor in these.

6.1.5 Conclusions of 6.1:- Career Choice, Progression and Turning Points

In-depth content analysis revealed that the 31 high-flyers followed one of three different patterns of career progression. The thesis has identified these as 'education-related', 'individualised' and 're-directed'. Several respondents decided to enter and pursue a career totally unrelated to their original education. This is unlike respondents who had to end their original career and pursue something completely different due to external life events or the action of others.

However more respondents with acquired disabilities than with congenital disabilities were likely to pursue education-related careers. This could be a consequence of the former having a non-disabled childhood, being expected to achieve high standards, and attending mainstream education with its wide curriculum.

The findings indicate that unlike the rhetoric of the boundaryless career, some of the disabled people in the study saw benefits of staying with one employer for a long time as opposed to undergoing regular moves and employer changes. This is consistent with evidence presented by the Labour Force Survey (1998) which suggests that because many employees with disabilities require accommodations in their homes and services in their communities they are far less likely to make regular job and employer transitions during their working lives.

Several respondents considered their disability to be a positive causal factor of their personal and professional success. They believed it helped them to appreciate the needs of disabled customers and serve them effectively. Their perceptions and experiences support the contentions expressed in a body of literature (e.g. Danelli,

2000; Young, 1990), suggesting there has been a move towards the appreciation of difference and mutual respect in economic society, and the recognition that previously undervalued or unrecognised skills of disabled people are indeed desirable attributes, which can potentially enrich organisations.

Several respondents followed a pattern of individualised career progression, that is progression formulated by a series of challenging jobs, where there is no connection between the career and prior educational training. This was more common for the respondents with congenital disabilities, who recognised it as being the only way they could achieve career success in their desired occupation. These respondents were not able to pursue their desired career via educational training, due to being denied the opportunity to achieve qualifications in that field as a result of being disabled. Several respondents who followed an individualised pattern of career progression had achieved successful careers in the arts sector, a line of work where progression via a series of different jobs with no obvious structure to connect them is common for disabled and non-disabled employees.

For some respondents, disability had a significant influence on the route of career progression they followed, although gender did not. A number of the sample experienced dramatic career changes, initiated by external events such as the acquisition of an impairment, personal life developments or the actions of others, which marked a turning point in their lives, and the beginning of their 'redirected' career progression. A few respondents with congenital disabilities re-oriented their career path as a result of a religious calling. Hall (1976) along with other developmental theorists recognises that, for a non-disabled individual, career changes

are related to different stages in life which are marked by different needs, concerns, commitments, aspirations and interests. To some extent, this thesis demonstrates that this can be true for disabled individuals.

6.2:-Theme 2: Childhood

Introduction

Family and childhood socialisation was identified as important to how the disabled high-flyers perceived and arrived at their goals of success. Childhood socialisation is, as a great body of discourse suggests, critical to a child's transition to adulthood in terms of their behaviour, their life choices, their strengths and weaknesses etc.

Two elements of childhood socialisation were discussed in the interviews with the disabled high-flyers. These were done so under the subheadings of:

Parenting influences and expectations:

"My family have been absolutely crucial to my development and success. Both went to Cambridge, so that had a major influence on their expectations of us. We were all expected to achieve academically."

Childhood experiences:

"I remember going to the Sunday Telegraph when I was 8 years old, seeing big rolls of paper being loaded onto presses and seeing my dad's name being printed a million times with the knowledge that it was going to go out all over Britain."

Analysis of the interviews revealed a variety of parent-child relationships, although, in most cases, they facilitated the cultivation of potential and encouraged the achievement of personal goals. Furthermore, it highlighted the extent to which gender and disability influenced the childhood socialisation of these respondents.

6.2.1 Parental Influences & Expectations

Some researchers argue that high parental expectations are fundamental to a child's success. The popular contention of the 'ambitious parent', moulding and encouraging their child to get a good education and a respectable job in a particular field, is seen as quite the norm for non-disabled male high-flyers in other studies (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988), and would seem to be at least partially true for some of the men in this study. These men had acquired their disability in adulthood and therefore, like the male high-flyers in other studies, had had the experience of a non-disabled childhood.

However parental ambition was not prevalent in the formulae of career success for the disabled high-flyers with congenital disabilities. As they were all disabled during or immediately after birth, disability inevitably became a major factor in their childhood socialisation, especially influencing what was expected of them. However, while there was no evidence of parents setting premeditated goals concerning the future occupation of their disabled children, there was evidence of contrasting levels of parental expectations.

Many parents had low expectations of their disabled children. This was suggested by several of the respondents with congenital disabilities, who expressed comments like:

"If you are a disabled person, particularly born disabled, parents, society and the medical profession don't really expect you to achieve that much. They have pretty low expectations"

This further implies that, in a stratified society disabled people are automatically ascribed with low status as they are perceived as socially and physically deviant, and incapable of contributing to the development of society's economy. Most of the

respondents were born during the 1950s-60s, in an era when disability politics had not been established and the whole concept was not understood by the layman, therefore parents automatically valued the opinion of the medical profession who conceived disabled people to be passive, dependent and incapable of pursuing an independent autonomous lifestyle (Oliver, 1990). This was apparent in John's case, as he remembers:

"My mother didn't really have any prior expectations of me, because she had received so much advice and medical prognosis about me always being dependent on someone or dying at birth."

Similarly, Mandy, the Associate Director of Graeae, believes:

"Because of attitudes towards disabled people, and attitudes towards people with my impairment generated by the medical establishment, I think my parents had been given quite low expectations in terms of how long I would live."

However parents of several respondents with childhood disabilities had relatively high expectations of them. They placed a high value on achievement and encouraged the attainment of high-flying goals, particularly in academic pursuits. Five of the eleven males claimed that, although their parents recognised the constraints of their disability, it was not perceived as a barrier to opportunity as they were still ambitious for their children to succeed. This was recounted by Gordon, a financial planner, who, as previously described, followed an education-related path of career progression:

"I was expected to do and to achieve what my brothers and sisters did and what all my friends were achieving. I was very rarely allowed to get away with the excuse 'I can't walk, I can't do it.' In nearly everything I did I had to achieve the same as

everybody else and, I think, that was vital to my later success in university and my career."

Kevin affirms the existence of such parental expectations during his childhood by his comment:

"My parents are both teachers and never stated their exact expectations of me. However what they did say was 'why is your report bad'; 'why aren't you working harder', 'don't you think you can do better?'"

Such familial behaviour was not limited to the males. Five out of the nine women born with a disability felt that although they were not directed by prescribed expectations, they were still encouraged to aim high. Annie, herself concerned with achieving personal goals, reflects:

"It was never any good, in my family, to be as good as other people, we were supposed to be better. How success was defined to me is probably how I define it to myself now."

Caroline, a Speech and Language Therapist, felt that her parents pushed her slightly harder to ensure her achievements were on par with her siblings and satisfied the family's underlying middle class principles:

"My parents expected me to get on with things. Mum has said that maybe I was treated slightly harder than my brother and sister to make me get there and achieve."

Ten out of the twenty respondents with a congenital disability had at least one parent who occupied a high-status profession. Furthermore, they had been nurtured within a culture which stressed the importance of accomplishment and doing well. Thus, high achievers, high aspirations and strong need for achievement were predominant. It can

be suggested that certain observable cues and abstract social class symbols (e.g. education, parents' jobs) within the family unit were recognised by the respondents during their childhood, and inevitably influenced their occupational preferences and their life style. Alice, a Strategy Manager for Rail Track, identified her birth family's financial wealth as significant to her current situation:

"In the 60s, when I was little, I would have been completely stuck in and become socially isolated if I hadn't grown up in a fairly wealthy family. Wealth has enabled me to do all sorts of things like the way I set up my household; to get the care support that I needed that made it possible for me to get out to work on time and get home on time."

In contrast, just over a quarter of the respondents in this sub-group had parents who did not have significant amounts of wealth or occupy a high-status position in society's stratification system. They recalled that although their parents had no rigid expectations of the children, in terms of achieving, they did expect the children to do what made them happy and supported their choices. As Ann, a Labour Party MP, stated:

"I came from a very traditional working class family with very loving parents who always said 'just do your best'. They were always happy to support and be supportive".

So for these respondents parental expectations were neither low nor achievement-orientated, but simply for them to gain happiness.

Eleven respondents in the sample of disabled high-flyers acquired their impairment, either through illness or accident, in their early adult life. For this reason parental

expectations were not influenced by childhood disability. Unlike several respondents with congenital disabilities, none of the respondents with an acquired impairment recalled their parents having low expectations of them. Most of the men were nurtured within a middle class or Asian culture where education was prized and the achievement of high standards was emphasised:

"My father was a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy. He was ambitious and successful. My father and his brothers were extremely well educated. By the age of 5 I was doing trigonometry!" (Barry, Senior Architect)

and, as was stated by Fadul:

"My father's connection with government officials taught him education was very important so all my family. All children, from the first sister to the last, are educated."

Again the parents who were ambitious for their children to be great achievers themselves worked in high-status occupations. Such was also indicated by the case of Stephen, a University Professor whose parents both graduated from Oxford University and whose father was a medical doctor in tropical medicine.

Out of the three females with acquired disabilities, not one recalled being exposed to the ambitious or achievement-oriented styles of parenting. Rather, their upbringing was described as primarily working class and their parents as supportive and loving, permitting them to do anything that would generate happiness. As one woman claimed:

"My parents never pushed me to become anything particular. Their philosophy was to do what's right for you, what you want to do and what makes you happy."

The difference in the perceptions of both male and female respondents with acquired disabilities in terms of what their parents expected of them, suggests that gender had a significant influence on parental expectations of the non-disabled children. Gender socialisation will be discussed further, and in relation to disabled childhoods, later in the section.

6.2.2 Childhood Experiences

Nabil, an established actor, experienced an 'orphanic existence', as his early formative years were parentless due to being sent to a boarding school at the age of three. Dean, also sent to a residential school at an early age, felt it was the school not his parents, that had the greatest influence on his personality and character formation. Furthermore it provided him with the opportunity and facilities to realise and demonstrate his full potential. He points out:

"Being away to school obviously gave me the opportunity to learn, to obtain qualifications and to gain real life experiences. If I hadn't gone to that Scope school, I would be in some poxy little day centre and would have been treated like a five year old for the rest of my life".

This suggests that the orphanic experience, if it involved alternative supports, could be seen as propagating a general feeling of independence and self-reliance. The positive correlation between the development of competence and self-confidence and the separation of maternal bonding thus, as Hoffman (1972) argues, is essential in order to cope with an environment independently.

Three men, who acquired their disabilities in early adulthood, also experienced this sense of childhood deprivation. Tony recalls the effects of being brought up in a matriarchal society, culminated with being separated from his father by the war:

"From nil to 6 I was in a one-parent family purely because my father was off fighting in the war. I'd had a very good relationship with all sorts of females - my mother, my grandmother, my aunts. I was the one nephew and grandchild, so I was really really petted."

Barry, another of the men, had to develop an early sense of responsibility and moved into an adult role from a young age:

"My father was very ill so a lot was put on the shoulders of my mother to bring up the family, and on my shoulders, as the eldest child, to look after my sisters."

Other tales of childhood deprivation expressed include the death of a parent, a traumatic hardship that was experienced by a few of the male respondents. John, a vicar, identified the death of his father as a significant determinant to his current occupation:

"My father died when I was 8, while I was in hospital. This influenced my spiritual being..."

Unlike the non-disabled high-flyers in other research and those with acquired disabilities in this research, many of the high-flyers with childhood disabilities in the current investigation spent a substantial part of their childhood being recipients of substantial medical intervention and negative prognosis. They recalled frequent periods of hospitalisation and *"...staring death in the face"* which suggests that, for these individuals who also had adult support during childhood, early traumas could

induce the emergence of added strengths of self-sufficiency, independence and 'survivability' which were beneficial to their future orientations.

However the findings suggest that all of the high-flyers in the study who experienced childhood trauma, whether disabled as children or not, developed a sense of strength through adversity. They coped successfully with early traumatic events which, it can be argued, set a pattern for successfully coping with future life events. According to Cooper & Hingley (1985, p.24), early adverse experiences could be argued to instigate an early sense of mastery, independence and self-sufficiency because, the wound of adverse experiences is said to lead to the creation of a healthy scar tissue which is stronger than normal and protects the damaged area. This line of reasoning was supported by several of the respondents. For example, Kevin who was nurtured by his family to realise his potential, evidenced his determination by his comment:

"I had a tracheotomy which prevented me speaking for 4 months. During that time my self-esteem was pulled down by doctors who made me feel like nothing. I think my drive to succeed stemmed, firstly from my determination to defeat them and prove them wrong."

Many of the respondents identified positive experiences in their childhood which, they felt, influenced their occupational choice. As Gordon, a financial planner, reflected:

"As a child I was always interested in work, business, how things were made. As my father was a banker he had a lot of contacts with business people who ran factories. Every week we (my brothers and I) were pestering him to arrange a trip to one of the factories."

Similarly, Ann, who was brought up in a supportive working class family, recalled a childhood experience that seemed to have a strong influence on her beliefs and thus her choice to become a candidate for the Labour Party:

“When I was about nine, I remember going into this flat; there were bare floor boards and hardly any furniture. I was aware of deprivation, of real poverty. That was a very important political thing for me in as much as I realised this wasn't right, we shouldn't have people living in these conditions. I realised that we should have social equality, that people have responsibilities for each other.”

The connection between childhood events and current occupation can also be exemplified by the following quote, by Annie, a freelance journalist:

“I remember going to the Sunday Telegraph when I was 8 years old and seeing big rolls of paper being loaded onto presses and seeing my dad's name being printed a million times with the knowledge that it was going to go out all over Britain.”

Similarly Ewan, a theatre director, developed a keen interest in performing arts after a significant childhood event:

“When I was 13/14 I remember walking along the canal with a friend, on a school night, and meeting these two really attractive girls who invited us to this thing called Youth Theatre on Sundays. I only went to seek their affection as I had no interest or knowledge of drama, but somewhere along the line I got interested in drama”

Two women, who have successful careers in the arts, mentioned that their familial environment had a significant impact on their choice of occupation. Their reports suggest that as children, they were frequently exposed to positive experiences and attitudes associated with their current vocation. As Celeste reflects:

“My mother actually used to be a dancer when she was younger. She and her sister used to do cabaret, doing tap, and they used to perform at tea dances and other places. My aunt, my mum’s sister, was in the entertainment team during the war; she was a dancer. One of my brothers, although he was in the Air Force, has always had a band and played guitar. My sister also trained as an actress years ago.”

Similarly Damien remembers the influence her childhood environment had on her occupational choice:

“...my family were involved in the arts as well so they had an inevitable influence”.

So, as has been demonstrated above, many of the disabled high-flyers in the sample identified childhood events that they believed had an impact on their personal and professional development later in life. Some issues discussed centred on overcoming hardships – for instance, death of parent, leaving home at an early age, frequent periods of hospitalisation. Others were about single events which occurred during the respondents’ childhood but were considered to have had an influence on their future occupational choice.

Several of the respondents, with and without childhood disabilities, experienced some kind of deprivation and trauma as children. Although some of these experiences were disability-related, some were not. However whatever caused such adverse experiences, they made the high-flyers stronger, more aware of potential barriers and able to improve coping with future life events successfully. As Cox & Cooper (1988) have suggested, it is not the events an individual encounters which is important to their development, but how he or she responds to them.

6.2.3 Gender Socialisation

None of the respondents with congenital disabilities mentioned anything to suggest that their gender had any influence on their parents' expectations of them. All of them, both male and female, believed disability was in fact a primary attribute of their childhood and, thus significantly influenced others' behaviour towards, and expectations of, them. Hazel, who studied I.T. and taught it in a college of Further Education for several years before becoming a vicar, said that her parents:

"... were told not to expect anything. They never tried to hold me back, they never said 'you can't do that or you can't do this'."

Similarly, Annalu, a lecturer in Applied Computer Science at Dundee University, was brought up to be the best she could in whatever she chose to do. Although she was encouraged to achieve academically, her parents' expectations of her were never guided by her gender, which is evident by the fact she chose to study and teach computer sciences:

"The possibility of computing came up, and that's what they encouraged me to do."

The two sisters, Sue and Alice, spoke about how their disability had a substantial effect on what their parents expected of them compared to what was expected of their two non-disabled brothers:

"I'm not quite sure whether they had high expectations of us girls, but they did for the boys because they're 'normal'. For us girls, I think they just took things as they came and didn't hold us back. They expected us to do as well as we could."

The narratives reveal that a third of the women with congenital disabilities were greatly inspired by their fathers. Both Alice and Sue mentioned the positive influence

that their father had on their career development and success in careers that would have been considered gender atypical during the late 70s and 80s. Alice, who spent her former years developing a career in I.T., thought of her father as her mentor:

"I think my dad is my only real mentor, he was a management consultant towards the end of his career from the age of about 52. And I learnt a lot from him. I actually model myself, quite a bit, on him."

Annie, the journalist, was also very inspired by her father:

"My dad's career in journalism was what set me towards what I wanted to do. I learnt from him, by going down to his London office and seeing how he worked."

However, for respondents with acquired disabilities and non-disabled childhoods, there was a noticeable gender related difference in what they perceived their parents expected of them. As has been mentioned above, while the men believed their parents were ambitious for them to achieve high goals in terms of education and employment, the women considered their parents' only expectation of them was to do what made them happy.

6.2.4 Conclusions of 6.2:- Childhood

The main focus of this section has been the effects of parental expectations and childhood experience on later development. There is moderately strong evidence, consistent with findings of other studies (e.g. Cooper & Hingley; Cox & Cooper; White et al), that early feelings of self-sufficiency, responsibility and independence were important. They seemed to be connected, in the minds of the respondents, with events such as the death of a parent, being away at boarding school at an early age, or in the case of the group in question, spending a substantial part of childhood critically ill in hospital.

The findings should, however, be treated with caution as it is not known (from this study) whether other, less successful, disabled people also have similar background events in childhood. In some cases they obviously do. Many disabled children experience separation from their parents, but they do not all grow up to be successful in their career, or indeed have a career. Many disabled children seem to spend the majority of their early years under medical surveillance. While these are, obviously, very significant events, what is important is not the event itself, but how the individual responds to it. The support the individual receives is also important for them to successfully cope with adverse situations. The ways in which the high-flyers in this study responded and coped with these difficult childhood events set a pattern for successfully handling other events throughout life.

As might be expected, parental influences were crucial during the respondents' formative years. Most of the respondents identified their parents as significant to the cultivation of their potential, both in terms of social and professional progress.

However disability did have a major influence on parental expectations of respondents with congenital disabilities, although gender did not. On the other hand, the respondents with acquired disabilities were exposed to gender socialisation, as non-disabled children. Therefore gender issues did indeed have an effect on what parents expected of them.

1. Gender differences in childhood socialisation

Consistent with previous research on the historic experiences of high-flyers (Cox & Cooper, 1988; Cooper & Hingley, 1985; White et al, 1992) the impact of childhood deprivation was reported to be significant to the propagation of the respondents' 'survival skills' which led to a basic feeling of strength, self-sufficiency and independence. This was particularly true for the males in the sample who, it was discovered, were more likely, than the females, to have experienced an orphanic existence or some kind of childhood trauma during their most formative years.

All of the women who had a non-disabled childhood were supported, by their parents, to do whatever made them happy, rather than to become great achievers as the men were expected to be. This is consistent with White et al's (1992) study which reported that a high proportion of successful women in their sample had supportive, loving parents who had no rigid expectations of them other than to be happy. Furthermore the women were brought up to strive more for affiliation than mastery.

The influence of the father seemed particularly important in providing a role model to the women. This was more evident for the women with congenital disabilities. The mother was remembered in terms of providing elements of security and

encouragement. Hennig & Hackman (1964) evidenced a special relationship between fathers and daughters. They state that the relationship with their father added another dimension to childhood from which the girls derived attention, approval, reward and confirmation.

There were no specific signs that gender had any significant impact on the childhood socialisation of the women with congenital disabilities, and on their occupational choice and orientation as adults. Several of these women pursued gender atypical careers which could be the consequence of having supportive parents who prized high achievement although did not specify achievements should be in a particular field. However the women's choice to pursue gender atypical careers could also be attributed to the fact that disability was the primary causation in their socialisation, overriding gender. This can be supported by the fact that the women were not particularly guided, as children, to follow traditional gender roles of wife and mother because their parents did not know what to expect of a disabled child or, indeed whether it would live to experience adulthood. As the literature reviewed in Chapter 4 (e.g. Russo, 1988) suggests, this may be partly due to the societal myth that disabled women are asexual, and incapable of leading socially and sexually fulfilling lives. However this was not altogether a negative thing as it permitted the women to compete against men in the professional sector and succeed in gender atypical careers. Baumann (1997) believes that the lack of options available to disabled women could make them more dedicated towards a career. Further she suggests that having a physical disability had a significant influence on the women's career aspirations in terms of driving them to work harder and occupy a higher status to divert attention away from their physical limitations.

2. The effects of onset of disability on childhood socialisation

Onset of disability seemed to have a significant influence on the respondents' childhood socialisation. According to the respondents with congenital disabilities, parents were unaware of what was physically possible for their disabled children to achieve. None of the respondents thought that their parents prescribed specific occupational goals for them, and several considered their parents to have had very low expectations of them as disabled children. A smaller number of respondents perceived their parents to have no real expectations for them other than to do what made them happy. However, half of the respondents were nurtured within a middle class culture which emphasised the value of hard work and encouraged the achievement of high standards, particularly in academic pursuits. So in this instance social class, played a significant part in respondents' childhood socialisation. Although the effects of social class were diluted and, at times, tended to be overriden by the respondents' congenital disabilities, it was still seen to be an important determinant to their life choices and direction. This is consistent with Pfeffer (1990) who maintains that the social class structure that enables certain individuals to have access to education, jobs and higher income still rules in the disability community.

Disability was believed to serve as a "master status", sometimes eclipsing other social categories, including gender. Thus, the professional development of respondents with congenital disabilities was not significantly moulded by traditional gender socialisation, unlike the development of respondents who had acquired their disabilities in adulthood.

Furthermore, regardless of their birth order, these children were provided with extensive parental attention and affection, had their needs gratified quickly and received help promptly when in distress. This is supported by a large body of literature (e.g. Baldwin and Carlisle, 1994; Baldwin and Glendinning, 1982; Glendinning, 1983; Sloper and Turner, 1992) which contends that disabled children are likely to receive extensive attention due to their physical care demands.

However the majority of respondents with acquired disabilities, especially males, were expected to achieve according to their parents' high expectations. This supports the popular conception of the 'ambitious' parent cited in previous studies of high-flyers and driving forces of success (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988). Although some of the respondents with congenital disabilities were also striving to meet high parental expectations, it can be argued that their childhood disability influenced parents to expect what was physically achievable for the child as opposed to what they wanted the child to achieve.

6.3:-Theme 3: Personality, Motivation & Work Centrality

Introduction

A possible explanation for the low proportion of disabled people in powerful, prestigious positions in the labour market may be their motivations to work. As discussed in Chapter 4, it can be argued that societal stereotypes of disabled people as being passive and dependent have had extensive influence on their own aspirations and their underemployment.

However the prejudice of negative expectations society holds of disabled people may, in itself, be an incentive to strive towards career success. The interpersonal competition of trying to gain the approval of others or avoiding social segregation can be argued to be significant causes of motivation (Raynor, 1974). It is possible that some disabled people choose to work in order to divert attention away from their disability and be identified by the contribution they make to society. As Sutherland (1981) maintains, the more one conforms to the functioning and maintenance of economic society, the less significant their disability becomes. Furthermore career striving, according to Raynor (1974), represents a major means of obtaining self-esteem. It facilitates the development of the self and its function in society and becomes a source of motivation, encouraging the attainment of various goals that define who a person is.

Analysis of the interviews reported other patterns of motivation, the majority of which were intrinsic, although money, an external source of motivation, was identified as very important for most of the respondents. The respondents' patterns of motivation will be discussed below (section 6.3.1 of this chapter). It will highlight any

differences and similarities, in terms of patterns of motivation, caused by gender or diversity.

The cognitions and affects of work centrality were examined, evincing the extent of general importance that working has in the lives of the disabled high-flyers. This is discussed below under theme 2 (section 6.3.2), which also illustrates the respondents' strong self-efficacy beliefs.

Both, the respondents' motivational tendencies and the facets of their work centrality, evidenced their locus of control as being primarily internal. This was also emphasised by their other characteristics that were revealed in theme three (section 6.3.3), locus of control, which reports the extent to which the respondents believe they can exercise control over their rewards they receive. It further describes if and how the disabled high-flyers perceive luck as making a contribution to their success.

6.3.1 Patterns of motivation

A total of seven different patterns of motivation were identified to be important to the respondents: six were intrinsic and one was extrinsic. These patterns of motivation will be discussed under the following headings:

Achievement - the targets and objectives that have already been met or achieved:

"the research I do aims to help to enable, probably, the most severely disabled people communicate their wants, feelings & desires, so when I see people using something I have developed, or teachers & clinicians implementing ideas I have taught them, even my students becoming enthusiastic about programming, it's satisfying."

The disabled high-flyers all discussed the goals they had already achieved in order to arrive at their current professional position. To a certain extent, it was the success of these achievements that drove them to be ambitious and aspire to achieve future goals.

Ambition - personal drive to achieve some future objective, either personally or as part of the overall success of the organisation or company:

"I haven't reached my desired goals. I've written a novel but it hasn't been published. I'd like to have my novels published and I would like someone to ask me to write more of them."

Purposefulness/ Moral Satisfaction - giving someone a sense of purpose and opportunity to contribute to the welfare of society:

"My job is important because it gives me pleasure in doing something for somebody else and knowing they are going get pleasure from that for the rest of their lives!"

Determination - not giving up easily; persevering, even through adversity, to meet objectives:

"I will achieve what I want, by sticking my neck out and confronting people's preconceptions of disabled people being feeble, quiet and passive."

The respondents' determination was also demonstrated in their stories about their achievements and ambitions, and their need to do a good job for others.

Feedback & Recognition - concrete results providing external evidence of achievement, and getting recognition of others for doing a good job:

"I need to be recognised and need to be admired, by others"

Interest and Enjoyment - enjoying the job and having a keen interest in it:

“you have to enjoy and be interested in what you are doing. It’s no good working day in day out in a full time job if you hate it and it bores you.”

Money - financial payment for the work:

“Now I have my mortgage and my car, I have to say money motivates me to work”

Table 6.3 (below) shows how many of the respondents perceived themselves to be driven by these motivations. Several respondents mentioned being driven by more than one of the seven motivators identified. Further, one must be aware that, although money was not identified as a principal motivator for a large proportion of respondents, most considered money as important as will be evidenced by their quotes below.

Table 6.3: Patterns of Motivation

MOTIVATIONS							
Respondent Group	Achievement	Purposefulness & Moral Satisfaction	Ambition	Determination	Interest & Enjoyment	Feedback & Recognition	Money
M/A ¹	8	7	7	5	4	3	7
M/C ²	10	10	9	10	8	4	5
F/A ³	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
F/C ⁴	9	8	9	6	5	4	2
TOTAL	30	28	28	24	20	12	16

¹Males with acquired disabilities = 8

²Males with congenital disabilities = 11

³Females with acquired disabilities = 3

⁴Females with congenital disabilities = 9

1. Achievement

The majority of the group perceived previous achievements to be key to their professional and personal lives, delivering comments such as:

"I think we all need to know that we have achieved. I'm solely responsible for my achievements. I'm totally driven by my need to achieve."

Although they all knew that they had not achieved everything they wanted to achieve and were ambitious to keep goal posts moving, they also believed they had already successfully achieved many of their targets. As Gordon commented:

"I've achieved what I wanted to achieve and I have got the qualifications I wanted to get, I got the job I would have hoped to have achieved at this stage and station of my life."

Similarly Sue spent many years studying and training before she achieved her previous ambition to be a sole practitioner in her own law practice:

"I did a BA in Law at Nottingham University then I went to law college for six months because I took all the heads of exams all at once. Then I went into articles for two years with one firm of solicitors. After qualifying I was a partner in that firm. I, then left and set up my own firm, becoming a sole practitioner for about three or four months until my partner joined me."

Tony also believed he had achieved some of the major goals he set for himself during his time as a Careers Officer for disabled young people:

"I've been successful in terms of my criteria, which is that I have supported people, mostly young people, some older people to come to choices which they can then execute for themselves."

For a number of respondents, achievement was exemplified by the mere nature of their career that involved long periods of training and hard work culminated with perpetual success with no financial incentives. For Stephen, a professor in physics, achievement motivation was imperative for the acquisition of knowledge and proficiency in such a specialised discipline as physics and astronomy. His career

inherently calls for the ability to master and manipulate, show evidence of good achievement over time and persist in the face of difficulties.

The respondents' motivation was perceived as almost entirely intrinsic. From the narratives it can be inferred that some respondents' need for achievement was facilitated by the disequilibrium between the disabled minority and non-disabled majority, the need to prove their self-worth and to disprove traditional stereotypes of disabled people being passive and dependent. As Dave, a dancer, commented:

"I think people always expect me not to do well so, therefore, I have to do it that bit better!"

This point was echoed by Mat who believed:

"We [disabled people] have to try a bit harder in order to achieve the equivalent to our able-bodied counterparts."

Fadul, a barrister in Sudan who acquired his impairment in early adulthood, strongly supported the idea of disabled people being economically independent:

I feel it is very important for disabled people to work and not rely on the government or relatives. By working they achieve some autonomous goals and prove to society that disabled people can do as well as their fellow non-disabled people."

The respondents' need for achievement was also demonstrated by their tendency to persist in the face of adversity. The existence of such a psychological tendency is exemplified by the comments of Nabil, an actor with a congenital disability, who took twelve years to achieve his childhood ambition because:

"I wrote to drama schools up and down the country and every one told me to get lost, 'you're a cripple, you're in a wheelchair'. I didn't get to become an actor until

I was 27. I had to do it unconventionally. The only way it could be done, at that time, was to create a theatre company of disabled people, write your own shows, perform them."

The data revealed that the need for perpetual achievement was instilled into several of the respondents with acquired disabilities during the childhood socialisation process, inclusive of its religious beliefs, culture traditions or/and social class values. Two men, Priyesh and Fadul, were nurtured within non-western cultures which impressed the value of achievement and doing well in everything they did. As Priyesh pointed out:

"Even when I was younger there was this need to do well, to achieve things for myself."

Many of the other men and women were filled with stringent beliefs about being able *"to do things to the utmost of your ability"*; an attitude which was either manifested in childhood by familial values or engendered as a consequence of becoming physically impaired.

2. Ambition

Ambition was reported, in the narratives of several respondents, as a strong motivational force. They had a need to focus on future intentions and possessed an inner drive to master and manipulate their environment, stimulated by challenge and the need for change. Typical comments made by 'ambitious' respondents were: *"I shall always want to move forward"* or *"my goal posts shift all the time. I achieve one thing and then want the next league up"*

For a university lecturer, ambition was inferred by the nature of her career that required a long period of hierarchical training with progressive academic successes to reach the end goal. Further it can be argued that her successful past achievements drive her perpetual ambitions to achieve further.

Similarly, another woman asserts,

"I am constantly striving to achieve the next target"

thus indicating her strong ambitious nature and her preoccupation with perpetual learning and personal progression.

The self-delivered discourse of other women revealed that they all had a future vision and were ambitious to reach it. For example, Celeste was ambitious for Candoco, her dance company, to keep growing in terms of the work they do and the kind of audiences that sees it:

"We're making good work now and I want to do the best we can do. I want it to be challenging to us; I want it to challenge the audience; I want it to be exciting and fun and dark and all those things. That's the kind of achievement I seek - to have people come and enjoy that work."

Damien also demonstrated a concern for long-term goals by her career development. She started working for her current employer as a part-time trainee, and climbed the career ladder to her current position. As she affirms:

"...it has gone from a three month contract to a one year contract to a two year contract and now it is a fixed term post."

It can be inferred, by the life stories told by the respondents with acquired disabilities themselves, that they have a perpetual thirst for knowledge and are constantly striving to further their skills and capacities. Furthermore they are considered to be proficient

and committed to several avenues of expertise which is again demonstrative of their ambitious drive. Most hold no less than three respectable positions in society which may or may not be connected to their principal occupational role. For example, Barry, an architect by profession, is a joint senior partner in three practices. Another example of personal ambition is voiced by Fadul (a barrister) who is ambitious to continue learning new skills and gain knowledge, and is eager to become proficient in several avenues, not just his professional career. He believes that he has been given a life to use it productively, to continue to learn and develop, not to be idle and do nothing, and therefore he is ambitious to do so. For example, he speaks of how he spends his spare time:

"The work I do as a translator and lecturer is done in my spare time. Also, as a volunteer of a political society I have to attend meetings twice a week, from 6pm to 10pm. Last year I succeeded in winning a scholarship to a Masters in Environmental Law, which will, hopefully, continue into a PhD."

He, as many of the other men in this group, conceives future orientation as fundamental to the development of the self-concept because:

"If a person feels they have attained their required goals and desired destinations then he has to die because so long as there is life there is a willing of inspirations and of goals."

The respondents' aspirations and ambitions were not heavily influenced by the need to conform to traditional gender stereotypes. This was particularly true of the women with congenital disabilities, some of whom, when interviewed for this research, occupied gender atypical careers. However, three of the women with congenital

disabilities were in fact wives, and in one case, a mother, despite not being encouraged to aspire to such roles as disabled children.

3. Purposefulness and Moral Satisfaction

Another motivational factor found to be important to the career success of the disabled high-flyers, was purposefulness and moral satisfaction. Most of those interviewed perceived themselves to be motivated to engage in the act of working because it provided them with a purposeful role in society, which Liz considered to be very important:

“...having known a time when I thought that I couldn't work, work now is so important. I hated the feeling of not having any role in society!”

This was also considered critical to Alice, who felt that disabled people need to prove that they are not passive and dependent as is construed by traditional stereotypes, but in fact are capable of making a purposeful contribution to the economic development of society:

“...for disabled people, particularly those who have been disabled since early childhood or birth, there is an element of discrimination and that drives you to constantly justify your existence, to prove that you are worth keeping on the planet.”

However the significance of marriage became evident for three women in the sample who, prior to their marriage, saw their work as an imperative means of feeling valuable and proving their worth to society. But this emphasis on work became somewhat diluted when taking on other roles such as wife or mother. This is expressed by Annie, the freelance journalist:

"Getting married was a major turning point because it gave me permission to stop having to prove myself at work."

Alice, as mentioned above, also described her work as important to her in terms of proving her worth as a disabled person, but felt her need to constantly achieve in the work arena became less strong since she married:

"since I met my partner my need for achievement has been much less because he gives me my reason for being, so the stuff I said about my career being the reason for my being has been tempered for the past 5 years."

Many respondents perceived work as providing them with the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the happiness and well-being of their fellow citizens, from which they derived moral satisfaction. This was perceived to be more important than financial gain. As Tony, a specialist careers adviser for disabled people, declares:

"I think if you don't serve people, you no longer exist. If you serve yourself all the time, sooner or later, you'll be only appreciated for the money you have."

Barry maintains that his work permits him to guarantee the happiness and comfort of others. Occupying such powerful statuses provides opportunities to exercise original ideas and play an active part in inducing change, which several respondents found to be an incentive to work hard and do a good job. This suggests that several respondents were motivated, in part, by the moral satisfaction engendered by their occupational role. Nigel, a chartered accountant declares:

"Doing a good job for my clients is what really motivates me. You feel very conscious all the time that what you do for them has a significant impact on their future."

This is also true for Annalu, a university lecturer who believes she is driven by the moral satisfaction derived from her work:

"I'm helping to enable, probably, the most severely disabled people communicate their wants, feelings & desires."

Sue, a retired solicitor, claimed:

"I think the fact that I have experienced discrimination and know what it feels like means I feel empathy towards other people and that, in itself, motivates me to want to change things, because I know things can be better."

4. Determination

The above are all manifestations of a general determination to succeed, which was considered to be paramount to the success of several respondents in the group, regardless of their gender. Almost universally, determination was noted as beneficial to the high-flyers' professional and personal progression. Typical comments were:

"hard work and determination are the determinants of my success" and *"I'm a fighter"*. Many of the respondents used adjectives such as *"stubborn"* and *"bloody-minded"* when describing their path of progression. Several displayed the qualities of true internals, and showed no evidence of giving up easily in the face of difficulties. Determination was also considered essential for the respondents to survive prejudice against them as disabled people, and progress successfully in the non-disabled world.

Ann recalls:

"I wanted to be a teacher, and when I applied to go to college to qualify as a primary school teacher that was the first time somebody had said no 'you can't do it'. The doctor at the college said 'no'. I had a genetic condition that was gradually getting worst but I didn't think there was anything wrong with me. But he said 'no'

so I was determined I was going to be a teacher...I went off to university and got my degree, then I applied back to do a postgraduate at college, during which time the same doctor was still telling me that he wasn't very happy letting me qualify. In Scotland it's different, we have a general teaching council and all teachers must be registered with them before they can teach. The doctor stipulated that I had to have two years absolutely free of any kind of absence at all before he would let me register with the general teaching council. So I got through a year of teaching college and I also had a extra year at university and I didn't have any absences at all luckily, I didn't have the flu or anything. I started teaching in 1978 so I was successful that I got into teaching."

Determination was also considered to be vital to the recipe for success of the respondents who had to re-orientate their life styles and learn about a different culture i.e. as a disabled person, and how to combat the struggles they encountered as a result. For Priyesh, a Computer Programmer/Analyst, determination was perceived to be an essential enabler:

"...to pursue something and find ways of getting around it if it's difficult"

Barry, an architect, believed his determination was a latent personality trait triggered by the acquisition of his disability. His determination has enabled him to persevere against obstacles and relearn skills to live a full and healthy lifestyle as a disabled person. Further, it facilitated his successful career by providing him with the drive to achieve new skills, persisting through adversity to do so. He believes that becoming disabled has forced him to learn to drive and travel on an aeroplane:

“...my disability caused me to learning to drive a car to get from A to B...I probably would not have flown if I hadn't become disabled. Since my accident I have flown to most parts of Europe to lecture.”

It can be argued, from the evidence given in this and previous sections, that determination may well be a characteristic derived from individuals' early situations (e.g. separation from parents), which required them to take responsibility for themselves at quite an early stage in their lives. The respondents with congenital disabilities were, as has been highlighted in section 6.2 and will be again in section 6.4, victims of discrimination and prejudice during their childhood, and needed quite a bit of determination to persevere against it without breaking down and giving up.

5. Feedback and Recognition

Twelve respondents in the sample valued external evidence of achievement. This was not necessarily in monetary terms, but to be seen by others as doing a good job, or getting some concrete results from the work. For example, Annalu, a university lecturer and researcher, explains that it is important for her to:

“get feedback from fellow colleagues & people who admire my work.”

Barry also considered feedback, especially from clients, to be fundamental to his improvement and success as an architect.

Recognition was particularly important to the artists in the sample, whose success and progression on stage and screen is largely dependent on who sees you. Furthermore this was also important to the future inclusion of disabled people in the arts. Mat, an

actor, considered recognition to be important, not only for self-satisfaction and professional advancement, but also as a motivator to others, as he believes:

"...it's good for younger disabled people to have comfortable safe role models."

Celeste, an artistic director of a dance company, makes a similar point:

"Through our work, we do inspire people, not just disabled people, but dance critics. Obviously we do get bad reviews as well and some people don't like our work at all, and that's absolutely fine. But at least it provokes a response."

A few respondents perceived recognition to be important for their personal development and career success. Annie, a freelance journalist, feels that she has:

"...a need to be recognised and admired by others in order to be successful."

Caroline, a speech and language therapist, was more concerned with parental recognition:

"being recognised by my parents is very strong, being recognised by others is not so strong."

Hazel, a vicar, was motivated by the recognition she attained by her occupational status. Not only would it serve to divert attention away from her congenital disability but it also would provide Hazel with a respectable identity and respectable role in society. As she stated:

"being a priest is such a strong role that, when I am dressed up and wearing my dog collar, it tends to override anything else."

Thus it is possible that she is motivated by recognition in the work arena in order to expand her career sub-identity and curtail other sub-identities such as that resulting from her impairment.

6. Interest and Enjoyment

Many of the respondents expressed a keen interest in their job. Their narratives indicated that enjoyment and interest was seen as an asset to their current situation and helped them sustain their enthusiasm to do a good job and persevere through the difficult times. Several maintained it was their interest in their job that kept them committed. This was evident for those with vocational careers which involved working directly with people, including the artists in the sample who perceived work in the arts to be insecure and based on short-term contracts. The vicars in the sample also expressed an interest for the work they do with comments like:

“I believe I am doing something I am gifted to do, I am called to do. I also enjoy doing it which really helps” and *“I love life. I love living. I love people.”*

Nigel, a trained management accountant, believes:

“I think it’s very important to enjoy the work that you do because you’re doing it for most of the week”

A similar response was delivered by Priyesh who proposed ‘enjoyable work’ as being work that is:

“...stimulating and challenging to keep me interested and allow me to actually learn something from it.”

The women devoted a substantial amount of their energy to their work. Many believed it was the leading interest in their lives and perceived it as crucial to their lives, not only for subsistence and relative maintenance of life, but also to create wider social ties:

“How I earn my living is something that is very important on an economic, social and political level. I’m mixing professionally and mostly personally with people of a like mind, people that I would choose to spend time outside of work with”

(Mandy, Associate Director)

By the same nature, Annalu, a university lecturer announced:

"I usually get in here at about 8:15 in the morning & I seldom leave before 6 pm. Most days I take work home. It basically rules my life. I'm very passionate about the research I do, therefore most of my time is spent thinking about work."

This suggests that many of the respondents need to enjoy their work in order to dedicate their time and effort to producing good quality work. As Liz claimed:

"I have to care about what I'm doing. Sometimes I can be the most lazy person if I don't actually like what I'm doing."

7. Money

While most of the high-flyers in this group, particularly the respondents with children, mentioned that money was indeed necessary for a decent level of subsistence and a respectable lifestyle they all maintained that this was quite secondary to other motivations. For instance, one vicar declares:

"My salary is not phenomenal, and although it is important to allow me to live, I wouldn't say money is a major motivator."

For Mat, an actor, money was not an essential prerequisite to his work, but was considered important to satisfying his definition of success:

"I don't want to be a millionaire but I do want to have a house with some land, because I want to do my organic gardening."

Stephen, a university Professor, believes:

"Without the stimulation and earning power of a career, I probably wouldn't be still alive today. It enables me to earn enough money to support my family."

Priyesh needs a job that is challenging and stimulating, but considers the financial rewards acquired from it as important. He maintains that even though he is not primarily driven by money:

"It's always nice to earn a good amount of dosh!"

Therefore, despite the old saying, *"money can't buy happiness"*, it can be exchanged for many commodities which are necessary for survival and comfort. This was confirmed by two of the women, Liz and Damien who made comments like:

"...now I have my mortgage and my car, I have to say money motivates me to work, although it didn't used to."

However out of all of the respondents, Mick actually, television presenter, did identify money as a primary incentive for working. He believed that financial rewards were paramount for him to earn a respectable position in society's stratification system. As he asserts:

"I want to be famous. I am 32 now and want my own house, a decent car, to be able to travel the world etc. All this needs money. I think this is the best job in the world because you get loads of money for just being yourself."

Money was not considered to be important to all of the respondents in their current professional lives, even though it may have been in previous periods of their lives. For example, Craig recalled that, as a child, he was socialised to define success in terms of external factors of money and status. Thus this could have had a significant influence on his first career choice as he affirms:

“My first degree was in Economics. I used to think of a career in terms of business. I was always taught to be better than others, in exams, in jobs, earning more money etc.”

He soon realised that money was not enough to drive him to achieve success. He recognised that he was principally motivated by doing a good job and being of service to others, both of which are criteria of his current occupation of Church Minister:

“I have become more humble in my years, recognising that I am here to do whatever I’m called to do. And now I determine success as being a service to others.”

Having discovered what motivated the disabled high-flyers in this research sample, the data was closely examined to find out the extent to which work was central to their lives:

6.3.2 Work Centrality

All of the respondents displayed a high career centrality, defined by MOW Research Project (1988) as a *“general belief about the value of working in one’s life”*. Examination of the respondents’ cognitive and behavioural orientation, in relation to their work, revealed that work presently, or had previously, occupied a central position in their life. Three attributes were identified from the interview data, and also proposed by previous discourse (e.g. MOW Research Project, 1988; Dublin, 1956; White et al, 1992), to demonstrate an individual’s level of career centrality. These were:

Hours worked - the number of hours one spends participating in work related activities.

“The average is supposed to be 54 hours but it’s usually between 60 and 90.”

Identification with work - the extent to which work is central to one's self-image.

"The standing I have within the professional community I work in has given me a relatively high status. I feel I am respected in society."

Involvement and/or commitment to working - commitment to work demonstrated by a focus on future intentions, not short run experiences, and the fact that significant physical and emotional energy is expended in work.

"Although teaching is a 9-4 job it never was for me, I always took work home and I've always worked beyond the expected hours and all of that is part of being an MP"

The evidence below suggests that all of the respondents high in career centrality were characterised by either one, two or all three of the attributes:

1. Hours worked

The results demonstrated that many respondents in the group worked above and beyond their statutory working hours or, as one man put it:

"More than those listed in the job description!"

It can be inferred from the narratives that all of the men with acquired disabilities worked beyond their contractual hours, asserting a general belief that:

"you work the hours your job requires"

Many of the successful people affirmed that they would rarely work less than forty hours a week, and were likely to take work home with them in the evenings. In

addition, several worked weekends. One vicar calculated the time he spent working amounted to:

“A minimum of 12 hours a day 6 days a week. Wednesday is my day off as you get one day off a week. Roughly that works out as 72 hours a week.”

Likewise Tony remembered the hours that he was paid to work did not equal the hours he actually worked in his role as a Careers Advisor:

“I was paid for 37, but altogether I probably worked between 45 to 50 hours because the targets and goals which were set for me were horrendous. I had to do what I was paid for in the 37 paid hours, and the rest of the time, I did what I knew had to be done”

Several women felt this too. As Sue claims:

“I work full-time and more! For example, yesterday was Sunday and I was reading a draft guidance on the N.H.S disability things and was getting very hot under the collar! And Saturday I was reading the first draft of the first half of my research report. I sort of try not to work at the weekends but it's impossible.”

It is clear, from the respondents' interviews, that 'number of hours worked' was not always a satisfactory indicator of their work centrality. Data from their interviews compared with existing literature revealed two possible explanations for this. Firstly, the artists in the sample felt that due to the nature of their profession, their work pattern varied from week to week. However this is largely dependent on the fact that erratic freelance employment is typical in the arts industry. This was expressed by Nabil:

“As an actor, it's generally freelance. So the work isn't continuous, it goes in spurts. For example I was working in Scotland for two months. When I was working in City

of Joy, in Calcutta, it was for 10 weeks. Sometimes nothing happens for weeks. So the hours vary. If you work in film, you could be working 16-18 hours a day. When I work in theatre, an average day is 8 hours during rehearsals but as the show gets closer the hours increase. Whilst the show's open, you may only be working 3-4 hours a day."

Celeste, who sees her work as central to her life and important to her psychological well-being, delivers a similar point about the number of hours she works:

"It does depend on what we are doing. A working day, for us, is 10am to 6pm. That's on a rehearsal day. When we are performing, work starts at 12pm and we then go through the day until the end of the show, which is about 10 in the evening, with breaks in between. We may be doing workshops or residencies. Residencies usually last a week or two weeks. Workshop days are 10am-4pm".

The other possible reason why 'hours worked' may not be a suitable indicator of career centrality was supplied by Liz who attributes importance to her work, but due to ill health, is unable to work more than 37 hours a weeks, as is inferred from her comment:

"Although it is possible to work 37 hours a week, I do get physically tired, and if the job involves travelling a long distance to get there and back it may be questionable as to whether I can cope."

It can be deduced from the findings that although all of the respondents rated their work as highly important to their lives, not all of them could demonstrate this by the extra hours they worked, either due to the nature of their career or their physical stamina. The data indicated that only some of the people with acquired disabilities did

work above and beyond their statutory working hours, although several people with congenital disabilities worked overtime including weekends. Therefore the differences in the number of hours the respondents claimed they worked was not necessarily dependent on their gender or disability but rather on their career type, and not an indicator of work centrality.

2. Identification with work

A large number of respondents in the sample felt their work was instrumental to their identity. Several believed it gave them value and importance. Often the respondents saw their work as a means of expressing their self-worth to others and earning a respectable position in society. Several respondents believed that, on many occasions, their disability seemed to be the primary attribute by which they were identified. Thus they perceived their occupational status to be crucial to the reduction of diagnostic overshadowing (explained on p. 115), in that it served to override their disability identity which equated to a low status identity. For instance, Stephen felt that his occupational title of Professor provides a handy indicator of his position within the social stratification system. Moreover, it influences how he is treated, and responded to, by other people inside and outside his working environment. The Professor maintains that since earning his occupational status his disability status has become less prominent, although:

“Occasionally people talk over me, the ‘does he take sugar’ treatment, but that doesn’t upset me. I just feel: if only they realised”

A similar contention was postulated by Fadul, who believes that by holding a respectable purposeful position in the developing economy disabled people will be identified by their occupational role as opposed to their disability:

“it is very important for disabled people to work and achieve some autonomous goals and prove to society that disabled people can do as well as their fellow non-disabled people. Once you succeed in competing with and beyond others, you divert people's concentration from disability to other factors concerning your life.”

He sees work as a means of gaining equity in society and demonstrating individual potential.

Many of the women perceived their work to be central to their self-image. They saw their work as a means of satisfying an obligation in terms of personal responsibility or internalised norms of duty, and having a purposeful role in society. They believed that their work permitted them to make a positive contribution to the development of society, which, in turn is seen as significant to their psychological well-being, as well as economic, growth. As Annalu, a university lecturer, explained:

“getting this job gave me confidence that people weren't paying lip-service for what I was doing.”

The positive correlation between work and personal self-esteem was noted by Annie's experiences,

“On a working day I am more assertive and decisive than on a day when I'm not working”

She believes that the more she contributes to society the more her abilities are recognised and valued, thus making her feel she is respected by others, which was noted in the previous sub-section. However, unlike men, women are said to be interpersonal in their orientations. Caroline, a Speech & Language Therapist, believes that although her work has been central to her identity for a number of years, it has become more peripheral since she undertook a mothering role:

“ Work is probably less important now than it was two years ago, since I had the children. But financially, it's probably more important.”

3. Involvement and/or commitment to working

Most of the disabled high-flyers were significantly committed to their work. The amount of time spent in training or preparing for work is indicative of how fundamental work is to their lives. Furthermore it demonstrates the future intentional element of their work centrality. For instance, Annalu attained several qualifications and years of training to hold the occupational status of a university lecturer:

“After doing a Msc in Biomedical Engineering I came to Dundee to start my PhD in 1989 which took three years. In 1992 I was appointed as a research assistant to carry on with my PhD research. Since then I have had several short term contracts, until last year when I got a permanent lectureship.”

On a similar note, two of the men with acquired disabilities held occupational titles of ‘barrister’ and ‘professor’ which implied that they had spent many years in training, in preparation for work, and planning for a more advanced work situation. This suggests that work-related activities make up a substantial part of their lives.

For many of the respondents, work was the most preferred life sphere among multiple life spheres, thus implying the extent of mental and physical energy expended towards their job. Their commitment was not only displayed by behavioural elements such as the amount of time spent participating in work activities, but the personal value they attached to it and their concern for long-term planning and future orientation. They tended to place great value on progression and career advancement as well as learning new skills and achieving new goals. Bill, a trade finance advisor, revealed:

"Since my accident in 1981, I've been promoted four times. I've worked in London, Southampton and London again".

Many respondents were committed to their work as it concerned contributing to the welfare of others, as was mentioned before when identifying their patterns of motivation. The dedication to a cause theme was affirmed by Kevin who worked as a parliamentary officer of two charities with the principal aim of empowering disabled people and working towards a cure:

"I want results that are feasible and visible, that are making a difference."

Similarly, another respondent maintained that his work as a vicar was imperative to the growth of his inner self, both on a professional and personal level. He conceptualised his work as a means by which he could put his ideas into action, and become an inspiration to others.

Two of the women with acquired disabilities demonstrated their commitment to their work by the strong passion they felt towards their chosen profession for which they underwent many years of training. For example, Celeste started learning to dance at the age of three, went to dance college at the age of sixteen and has been in the dance profession ever since. She claims:

"...all I ever wanted to do was dance, before I was disabled. I wanted to be successful in dance... I trained with the London Contemporary Dance School and then joined the London Contemporary Dance Theatre for nearly three years until I had my accident."

A similar contention was expressed by Damien who maintains that a significant prerequisite when applying for a job was:

“it’s got to be in the arts because I don’t know how to work in any other sector. I thought about it sometimes but then resorted to the fact that my work has got to be in the arts.”

Her commitment was further indicated by her tendency to persist in the face of obstacles to achieve her work goals successfully:

“if you don’t get it the first time you will come back and keep trying.”

It can be argued, on the basis of the evidence above, that all of the disabled high-flyers, regardless of their gender or disability, perceived their work to occupy a central or most preferred position in their lives. Some demonstrated this by working long hours, like the high-flyers in Cox & Cooper’s (1988) study, while others showed a strong commitment to their work by their long-range planning and futuristic vision. Most of the disabled people perceived their work as very important to their self-image, and how others behave towards them. Even the women, who occupied other life roles like wife and mother, described their work as crucial to their psychological well-being, although their personal life roles had reduced their need to use work to confirm their worth as disabled people in a non-disabled society.

The fourth sub-section examines whether the respondents’ perceive their successes and failures in life to be primarily as a result of their own behaviour or the behaviour of others. It can be deduced already, from what has been discussed about patterns of motivation, that these people are likely to have an internal locus of control which can be perceived as a necessary condition for intrinsic motivation. However this will be demonstrated more clearly below:

6.3.3 Locus of Control

The interview discourse showed the significance of locus of control in determining the career success of the 31 high-flyers. Content analysis of the interviews demonstrated that the respondents had an internal locus of control, indicated by their self-confidence and ability to take responsibility for their own actions. They also demonstrated competence, self-reliance, initiative and independence, which other authors (e.g. Andrisani and Nestel, 1976; Shapero, 1975) have implied are characteristic of true internals. Further, if the respondents were confronted with adversity they were prepared, if necessary, to challenge and change the existing system and not be constrained by conventional assumptions or beliefs, thus enhancing feelings of competence and self-determination.

The fact that the individual disabled people in this group had all reached relatively high and prestigious positions in their careers is indicative of their power to control their own destiny which would reinforce a personal sense of internality. There was a strong belief, among respondents, that it was primarily their behaviour, and not the behaviour of the external environment, that affected their life development. As Nabil pointed out:

“You can’t sit back in this job because you can get forgotten. So you have to take opportunities when they present themselves and keep pushing.”

A similar contention was expressed by Fadul:

“As far as I know I have the ability and the strength to achieve my goals. Especially in the academic field, I don’t find any difficulty to achieve my goals.”

When he does experience setbacks during his pursuits, he believes it is his responsibility to resolve them. He explains:

"As soon as my work is assigned to me I am able to make certain measurements to test how long I should spend on it, how long it should take to complete, how much effort should I put in it, what are the relevant and irrelevant references and who are the persons with whom I must consult to finish off the work."

Likewise Barry believes:

"To be successful in your chosen career, I think you have to sit down and think it through, check out all the pros and cons; if it is viable then go for it. It's down to you as an individual and the people you work with."

The evidence noted that other respondents were also unlikely to be discouraged by negative barriers imposed on them by external factors. Rather they struggled to find strategies to overcome them. The story of Ann, M.P., illustrates this point:

"...I've always won through in the end, but it's been touch and go on occasion. Not long after I took over as Head of the Department it felt as if the department was failing around me because members of staff were leaving. A member of staff had a mental break down and another member of staff had serious disciplinary problems. It seemed as if it was just getting worse and worse so I had supply teachers in and the kids were behaving badly with them...I couldn't teach my class because I had to sort out the others, and as I did that my own class misbehaved. It seemed as though it was just a nightmare; but I kept working through that and I kept on putting things in place and it started to ease it and then someone else was promoted in the department and someone else came back into the department. Almost overnight the department was transformed, because I had been working for those two years. Almost at one stage I thought about giving up. I thought I don't need this, I don't

need all this stress, but I didn't give up, I went on and it all came right in the end, and it turned out to be a really good department and it was worth all the struggle."

At the time of the interview Annalu's biggest challenge was teaching Applied Computer Science to a lecture theatre full of first year undergraduates without being able to write notes and information on the blackboard (an action which is not physically possible for her). She explained the strategies she used to make the challenge of teaching a success:

"teaching large groups means I have to work out the best way of getting the information to the students without being able to do things like scribbling on the blackboard... I use a lot of overheads. This is a lot of preparation as I have to anticipate any questions that might come up, which is very difficult with first year computing students. I use a package called Powerpoint which enables me to create slides & project them to the class, but I don't actually like using that as it turns into a presentation other than teaching. So I've got some tricks up my sleeve that I'm going to use this year, for instance I'm going to ask students to come up & write on the board when they have a problem. So they can actually work through the problems themselves & help me to give feedback in a mentoring capacity."

When Chris, the TV Critic, is confronted with a difficult situation or task he tends to analyse it first in order to determine why it may be difficult for him to handle, and based on what he has learned, seeks alternative ways of managing it:

"First of all you have to be able to analyse why the task is difficult. You need to analyse, not just what is wrong but why it's wrong so you have an understanding of what you can do about it. And you have to see whether you can handle the problem yourself or whether you need help from someone else. If you do require assistance

from someone else, you have to be able to communicate to them what you need and why you need it. I don't leave things and let them drift."

On a similar note, Tanni, an athlete, asserts:

"I have very clear goals about where I want to be, and am actually able to step away from that and get round what I have to do in order to get there. When I come across a problem, I probably have 5 minutes of panic, then actually sit down and try to work out what needs to be done, try and look at all the options and then make a choice on what's the best thing to do."

Several respondents, men and women, trusted their own effectiveness, knowing when to continue fighting against obstacles and when to let go. It was inferred, by the respondents' stories, that their experience of living as a disabled person in a non-disabled society taught them when it is worth persisting and when it is not worth expending such energy on the impossible. As Mandy, associate director of a theatre company, reasons:

"I think, as a disabled person, I tend to be quite methodical 'cos often if you have limited independence because of limited access, so you tend to have to think things through throughout your day, from booking a cab, to booking the train 3 days ahead. I think, because of those life experiences, I'm quite patient and tolerant because you just say 'Here we go again', you know that generally things are not worth getting yourself angry over. I think experience brings you the knowledge of when it's worth fighting and getting angry and frustrated and when it isn't."

Celeste made a similar contention:

"I think experience brings you the knowledge of when it's worth getting angry and frustrated and when it isn't."

A large proportion of the successful disabled people in the current study perceived their success to be due to their perseverance, tenacity and innovation, traits identified by other studies (e.g. White et al, 1992) as being prevalent in people with an internal locus of control. Many felt that these traits were crucial for them to achieve their success goals despite meeting with several encounters of disability discrimination along the way. As Sue, a retired solicitor, recalls:

"I used to sit in my office and a client would come in for the first time and you could see them looking around for the solicitor. They couldn't really believe it was me. And I think I must be the only solicitor who's been tickled under the chin, in the middle of the High Street, by a client. I think you get over those by being damn good and actually proving that you are a jolly good solicitor!"

(Retired Solicitor)

Stephen, currently a professor at Cambridge University, demonstrated his internal locus of control by his pursuit and completion of a PhD in Cosmology which required him to be intrinsically motivated, seeking to maximise satisfaction through responsibility, challenge and learning derived from the task. It can also be argued that Stephen's doctorate and current profession, achieved in spite of his disabling life experiences, indicates his tenacity and perseverance.

Luck & Timing

Although the respondents showed evidence of an internal locus of control, when they were asked if luck had to any influence on their success the initial response of many was that it did play a significant part in their overall success. This would seem to indicate that these respondents attributed their success to luck. Rotter (1966) would

argue that individuals with an external locus of control believe that their rewards are controlled by external factors, such as luck, chance, fate or powerful others. Further, in Colwill's (1984) terms, attributing success to luck is detrimental to individuals' careers as they learn nothing about how they achieved their success, failing to raise self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs and thus inhibiting career growth.

A large number of the disabled high-flyers felt that luck had played an important role in their career success. However, further clarification of this issue revealed that many of these respondents qualified their assertion that luck was indeed important, but it was also important to have the ability to capitalise on the opportunities luck presents, for example Annie says:

"There are a lot of opportunities that I caught as they went past, so it was lucky they were there, but it was under my control that I recognised them!"

A similar contention was voiced by Annalu, who conceived luck to mean:

"...lucky breaks - taking the opportunities when they arise. Things happen for a purpose. I think opportunities arise for everyone but it's up to them whether they take them."

Mick perceived the opportunities that he was given would, firstly help him to start a career in the entertainment industry, and secondly ensure it continued successfully, to be dependent, to a large extent, on luck:

"I think the entertainment industry is very much luck-based. For example, some people could have been working on small shows for years but never make it to stardom. And someone could have just started and got a chance to do a popular show and the opportunity to be rich and famous! So a lot of it is to do with luck."

Timing, although not examined in detail, did emerge from the data and was considered, by a number of respondents, to be an important element of their success. Timing seems to be based on the ability to overview a situation, to see the opportunities and pitfalls, to match available resources to the demands of a situation, and finally formulate a clear plan which is then acted upon. This was expressed by Dave, a dancer, who saw timing as being significant to how his career panned out:

"The way things worked out, everything seemed to happen at the right time. I don't think they could have worked out any better. I met the right people at the right time. There's no way I can say 'I wish I had started dancing 5 years earlier, because the opportunity wasn't there! I needed to spend 9 years in the post office to pass that time to meet that moment to start my dance career."

Likewise, Celeste also felt timing had an important part to play in her current professional situation,

"I wished I had started earlier, but maybe I wasn't ready to be as open as I was at the time I did start. I think Adam was a great influence because, after I had worked with Darjia, he was the one who really convinced me that this is what I should be doing".

Nabil, an established actor, believed his theatre company, for disabled people, was a success because it was launched at the right time, i.e. in 1981, The International Year of Disabled People.

6.3.4 Conclusions of 6.3:- Personality, Motivation and Work Centrality

There was a striking degree of similarity between the patterns of motivation of the males and females in the sample. The male and female high-flyers alike were intrinsically motivated, seeking to maximise their satisfaction through responsibility, challenge and learning derived from the task itself. They were ambitious and determined people with a high need for achievement, and the desire to perform an interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile activity. Many of the disabled high-flyers were driven to do a good job for other people, but also saw work as a means to prove their self worth by fulfilling a purposeful role in society. As Morse & Weiss (1955) assert, many workers are motivated to engage in the act of working as it grants them a sense of purpose in life, a psychological notion that is critical to increased self-esteem. This is also supported by Erickson (1963), who points out that information concerning career prospects, associated behaviour and rewards forms an important basis of careers, and subsequent commitment to a sense of self that becomes a component part of an individual's identity. This provides them with a unique sense of purpose and importance in society. Each career role comes with a ready-made identity that defines a person with respect to their position in society.

Altogether the disabled high-flyers had a sound record of past achievements, the success of which made them ambitious to achieve future goals. Raynor (1974) argues that immediate success is known to guarantee the opportunity for subsequent career striving, while immediate failure is known to guarantee future career failure through loss of opportunity to continue in that career path.

Although achievement, ambition, determination and purposefulness were identified as primary patterns of motivation for a large proportion of the sample, many respondents felt that they were inclined to expend more energy and enthusiasm in doing a better job if it was enjoyable and kept them stimulated. This is consistent with the MD's in Cox & Cooper's (1988) study who were motivated to spend much time and effort on work-related activities because they enjoyed their job, sometimes believing it was the leading interest in their lives.

All of the respondents had a tendency to prefer challenging tasks, believing they had the ability to dissect a problem in a logical and scientific way, make decisions about how to solve it and put these decisions into effect. Moreover, their stories demonstrate that they had a drive to persevere in the face of adversity, although they also knew when to stop. This infers that these disabled individuals had high mastery motivation which, for some, developed through their experiences of living and working in a disabling society. Like the successful people in White et al's (1992) study, the disabled high-flyers believed that their career success and indeed life success was due to their tenacity and perseverance combined with hard work. They were also less likely to attribute their success to pure luck, or other external factors, and more likely to exercise some control over their destiny - characteristic of people with an internal locus of control. As Andrisani and Nestel (1976) argue, an individual's internal belief that success results from hard work, and that failure is the individual's responsibility is firmly rooted in the Protestant work ethic.

Feedback and recognition was cited as a significant driving force for several respondents. It was evidenced that this pattern of motivation was greater for

respondents with congenital disabilities. The women claimed to be externally driven by the need to see concrete results of their efforts and to obtain recognition from others for their successes. The small percentage of men and women who felt feedback and recognition were important driving forces were mostly concentrated in the arts sector.

Most of the sample demonstrated high levels of career centrality, either in terms of behavioural elements such as hours worked, or by the fact that they perceived their work as being central to their self-image. However, women expressed a more interpersonal orientation to work. It was also discovered that 'hours worked' was not an appropriate indicator of the respondents' level of work centrality as a number of them work in the arts where working hours are erratic, varying from one week to another. Furthermore, a few respondents could not physically work more than their statutory hours due to their health. However their devotion to their career was nevertheless evidenced by the degree to which there were committed and involved in their career. Moreover, the fact that it permitted the establishment of social relations and the development of the self, both on a personal and professional level, further indicates how important work was to these disabled people.

While most respondents did not perceive money to be a primary motivator to work, it was deemed to be necessary to maintain an independent and respectable lifestyle. This pattern also emerges in other studies of successful people (e.g. Cox & Cooper, *High-flyers*; Mumford et al (1987), *Developing Directors*) who demonstrated very similar characteristics and motivations to the respondents in the current study. According to McClelland (1965):

“It is people with low achievement need who require money incentives to make them work harder. The person with the high need [for achievement] works hard anyway providing there is an opportunity to achieve something.”

(cited in Cox & Cooper, 1988, p. 62)

All members of the sample expended significant amounts of mental and physical energy on their job. A large number of respondents saw their work as a means of self-identification. Most felt it was the most preferred life sphere among multiple life spheres, which was implied not only by the physical time spent pursuing work-related activities but also by the personal value they attached to work. However, since getting married and having children, a small number of women considered their work to be less imperative to their social and psychological well-being, although considerably more important financially.

Both men and women demonstrated a significant commitment to their work by their focus on future intentions rather than short run experiences. Furthermore a large proportion of them spent a considerable amount of time preparing or in training for their current occupation. All of these behaviours are indicative of a high career centrality, which, as postulated by the MOW Research Project (1988), is when the work sphere occupies a central or most preferred position in an individual's life.

More women than men considered luck to play a part in their success. It was also considered more significant to the career success of respondents with congenital disabilities than those who acquired one later in life. Nevertheless, those who mentioned luck perceived it as important in so much as it presented them with

opportunities, but it was their hard work that turned these opportunities into successes. Several respondents, particularly artists considered timing to be important to their career success. They believed that certain turning points, significant to their life development, were triggered off as a consequence of being in the right place at the right time. This corresponds to Cooper and Hingley's (1985) theory which describes timing, in this context, as:

"...based on an ability to overview a complex situation, to see the opportunities and pitfalls, to match available resources to the demands of the situation and finally, to formulate a clear plan which is then acted upon."

(Cooper & Hingley, 1985, p.120)

6.4:-Theme 4: Education

Introduction

Education, as argued by many (e.g. O'Donnell, 1988, Giddens, 1997), is a significant prerequisite to occupational achievement. While it may not, on every occasion, directly determine an individual's exact vocational direction, the literacy and social skills it provides are viewed as necessary conditions for economic development and thus have significant impact on individuals' position within the labour market. Such was revealed through content analysis of the interviews with a group of disabled high-flyers.

All of the respondents had GCSE/O'Levels, the majority of them hold first degrees, and a few had achieved postgraduate qualifications. The data revealed that in several cases, there was an obvious connection between the subjects the respondents previously studied and their current occupational status, suggesting that education has been imperative to their present lifestyle.

By presenting first hand accounts of the respondents' educational experiences, this section highlights the benefits and deficits of segregated/special and mainstream education and how, if at all, the type of institutions attended influenced their transition to adulthood, particularly employment. Furthermore it identifies the extent to which educational careers differed for respondents with congenital disabilities and those who acquired their impairment later in life. It was noted that the latter group became disabled during their post college years and did not really encounter the potential discrimination and prejudice which children with congenital disabilities may have

been exposed to. In addition, the extent to which gender had an impact on the respondents' educational experiences will be discussed.

6.4.1 Influence of education on career success

Two aspects of education were identified as important to discover the extent to which education influenced the respondents' career success. These were discussed under the sub-headings of:

Type of school - the education establishments attended from infants through to further education (prior to university) may be segregated, mainstream or a combination of both.

"My primary, secondary and further education was segregated."

Level of Education - this may range from GCSE/O'Level to PhD

"I got 3 A Levels, an S Level and a degree."

Subject of Education- this refers to the subject of a respondent's highest qualification.

"My degree was in Speech and Language Therapy"

For the majority of the disabled high-flyers, education was considered to be the source by which they could learn the basic norms and values of the society in which they lived in order to function safely and harmoniously. A majority identified education as a primary ingredient in their social, psychological and cultural development.

6.4.1.1: Type of school

The findings show that seven out of the twenty respondents with congenital disabilities attended purely segregated educational institutions prior to university. As John recalls:

"I had the choice of going to a mainstream school or a special school. I chose Treleors because I thought if I went to a mainstream school I would be discriminated against. I think it would have been the case, particularly in the early 70's."

Another eight respondents were integrated into the mainstream educational system for the whole of their educational career. However a small proportion (25%) of the respondents with congenital disabilities experienced a combination of segregated and mainstream education as is indicated in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4: Type of school and college attended by respondents with congenital disabilities

Type of institution	No. of respondents - N=20	Total Percentage
Segregated school/ Segregated college	7	35
Mainstream school/ Mainstream college	8	40
Segregated school/ Mainstream college	2	10
Mainstream school/ Segregated college	1	5
Segregated/Mainstream school & Segregated college	2	10

Although not indicated in the table, the data also reveals that nine of the respondents with congenital disabilities (45%) attended residential school and/or college for part

or all of their compulsory education. For example Hazel attended a segregated residential college after being at a mainstream day school for several years:

"I went through the mainstream educational system until I was 14. Then I had some time out because I was beginning to feel I could not cope. Then I went to a day school for disabled children. Then I went to a mainstream FE college for a year but it became difficult to cope, and that is when I was offered a place at Hereward [a residential college for people with disabilities] where I stayed for 3 years."

As previously mentioned, eleven people in the sample acquired their disabilities, through accident or illness, during their adult years, and thus had a purely mainstream educational career from nursery school right through to university. This was evidenced by Bill, a trade finance advisor, who recalls:

"I went to public school, but got kicked out so went to grammar school then university."

The experiences of attending public school also concerned Tony, a Careers Officer, who contended:

"My childhood experiences were purely of the sporting and academic nature and really very little else. The one thing that a boys' public school teaches you is that you are a leader by definition."

6.4.1.2: Level of Education

Several of the high-flyers, especially those with acquired impairments, believed education was important, if not vital, to their current occupational status. This can be likened to research by Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1944), suggesting that the major criterion for professional status is the presence of an intellectual technique, acquired

by special training, which performs a service for society and is unavailable to the laity. For example, Fadul, a barrister believed:

"...without education I can't be a lawyer, without education I can't join the legal profession. So all my life is indebted to my education."

Similarly, Nigel, a management accountant, also perceived his education has informed his whole career:

"I did an economics degree which put me in a good position to do an accountancy qualification, so my whole career was initiated by my education."

A large proportion of the disabled high-flyers had attained a high level of education.

All of the respondents had GSCEs or O'Levels (see tables 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 below).

Twenty-six of them were university graduates. Five out of the six respondents who did not have a university degree were professional artists who underwent vocational training to be successful in their occupation.

The evidence demonstrates that fifteen of the twenty-six university graduates were men while eleven were women; sixteen had congenital disabilities and ten had acquired their disabilities. Only eight of the sixteen respondents with congenital disabilities perceived their education as being an essential prerequisite to their occupational choice and success. John, one of the vicars, recognised that it was the Theology training that he gained eighteen years after his initial schooling that proved to be the key to his current status. Peter, a computer analyst, was ambitious to become a Computer Programmer so decided to do a degree in Computer Science which, he believed, provided him with the knowledge base and qualifications to do so. He claims:

“the degree was relatively interesting, something I could do and there were good job openings available.”

Similarly, Sue, who pursued a career in law and became qualified as a solicitor as a result of doing a degree and a number of professional qualifications, claimed:

“There was no point being educated just for the sake of being educated, I had to be educated for a purpose. So doing law was a purpose. The way my education panned out led inexorably to me going into the law.”

For Annalu, every stage of her educational career was critical for her to progress and achieve her current position of university lecturer. She admits:

“...getting my PhD was one of my biggest positive landmarks”

Several respondents with congenital impairments did not identify education as being overtly significant to their career success. For example, Nabil, now an established actor, points out how his university education had no influence whatsoever on his current career success:

“I went to college and did business studies which has nothing to do with acting, and then I did a degree in Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology which has nothing to do with acting.”

This point is echoed by Alice, a Disability Strategy Manager at Rail Track, and formally a software programmer in the I.T. industry:

“I did a degree in language which was kind of linguistics, it’s a bit like a philosophy degree so it didn’t prepare me for anything in working terms.”

So, as has been argued in section 6.1 of this chapter, although several respondents followed education-related career patterns (as defined by this thesis), others pursued careers in fields completely unrelated to their previous education. As mentioned

previously in this chapter, the respondents with congenital disabilities were less likely to follow education-related career patterns, or achieve a university degree than respondents with acquired disabilities. However, such findings may be influenced by the fact there are only a small number of people in each sub-group.

Overall, nine respondents in the group had a postgraduate qualification. A number of them perceived it to be significant to their career development and success. For example, Stephen, a university professor, postulates that the acquisition of his PhD in Cosmology enabled him to pursue a career in academia, a career that could not be hindered by his impairment. He contends:

“Had I chosen almost any other career options I was considering such as the civil service, I wouldn't have been able to continue.”

Annalu, currently a university lecturer, felt that she needed a PhD to meet her desired career goals (i.e. to teach) and achieve a respectable status that would overshadow her disability:

“I did a straight computing degree & I couldn't get a job after that. No one would look at someone who was disabled, especially in South Africa which is way behind... I needed some more background because I wasn't getting much teaching out there, so I came here to do a PhD... After that I thought people must view what I do as important and I won't have to keep having to prove myself.”

Several respondents underwent professional and business training to facilitate their career progression. The importance of professional qualifications was confirmed by Peter, a computer science graduate presently working for Unisys,

"I also have some on the job training to keep up with new developments. I've just been working for a professional qualification recognised by the industry which would qualify me for the role of certified Microsoft Systems Engineer. This is an industry recognised qualification based on all the Microsoft packages that are available and will give me the opportunity to move within the company and within the industry."

On a similar note Alice, a Disability Strategy Manager, felt the acquisition of an MBA would provide her with more career scope and speed up her career progression. As she asserts:

"I took an MBA, because I got to the point where I thought I wasn't making the sort of progress that I really ought to be making. So I sponsored myself through an M.B.A in order to demonstrate to myself as much as to everybody else, that I was a competent and able manager."

Tables 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 below show the proportion of qualifications attained by male and female high-flyers with congenital and acquired disabilities. The data demonstrates that a large proportion of the females in the sample (approximately 92%) have undergraduate degrees compared to 83% of the males.

Table 6.4.1: Percentage of qualifications among respondents with congenital disabilities

Type of qualification	Male (N = 11)	Female (N = 9)	TOTAL % (N = 20)
<i>Postgraduate Degree</i>	9	44	25
<i>Undergraduate Degree or equivalent</i>	63	100	80
<i>Professional Qualification</i>	27	22	25
<i>A'Levels or equivalent</i>	90	100	95
<i>GCSE, O'Level or equivalent</i>	100	100	100

Table 6.4.2: Percentage of qualifications among respondents with acquired disabilities

Type of qualification	Male (N = 8)	Female (N = 3)	TOTAL % (N=11)
<i>Postgraduate Degree</i>	38	0	27
<i>Undergraduate Degree or equivalent</i>	100	67	91
<i>Professional qualifications</i>	13	67	27
<i>A'Levels or equivalent</i>	100	67	91
<i>GCSE, O'Level or equivalent</i>	100	100	100

As mentioned above, the majority of men without undergraduate degrees worked in the arts and trained via more vocational means. However, this was not always the reason behind their decision for not going to university. Some had no real drive to go to university, expressing comments like: *"I had no intention of going to university ever"* or *"I didn't want to be educated. I had had enough once I left school."*

However, Mick did want to go to university near his home, but did not have the option due to lack of wheelchair access.

The respondents who did not attend university were mostly men who had a congenital disability and were exposed to low expectations during their childhood. Moreover their social class background did not emphasise the need for achievement in educational pursuits.

6.1.4.3: Subject of Education

The subject distribution of the highest qualifications attained by the respondents is given below in table 6.4.3. The table also presents the title of each of the respondents' occupational status, indicating that for a large proportion of the sample (22), the path to high occupational status was achieved through their higher education.

Eleven of the nineteen males opted for degrees, at either undergraduate or postgraduate status, which they believed was paramount to their career development and in the same field. Fadul, a barrister, explained:

"In 1980 I joined the University of Hatomb where I spent four years. By 1984 I qualified with a LLB second class. The next year I registered for a postgraduate degree but my supervisor disappeared to join the Forces. Now I am doing a LLM in Environmental Law. Getting the required qualifications from a recognised, prestigious university and passing the bar examination was a major turning point in my career development."

Likewise Nigel, a management accountant, felt his education had initiated his whole career progression, as he states:

“I did an economics degree and that meant I was in a good position to do an accountancy qualification”

However, only four of these eleven males were congenitally disabled. Gordon, a financial planner, was one of these men. He considered his degree to be the key to a career in Accountancy,

“I went on to university and got a BSc in Economics and Accounting at Bristol University. Then I went on to do my professional training and I am now a qualified Chartered Accountant and Financial Planner.”

A possible reason for less congenitally disabled respondents pursuing ‘education-related’ careers (see section 6.1) could be that non-disabled students have more control over their choice of academic subjects, and thus their future career, than their disabled counterparts, either as a consequence of their actual impairment or how others react to it. Furthermore, the limited choice available to people with congenital disabilities could be due to the restrictions imposed onto the disability community by institutions in mainstream society including schools, colleges and universities. It could be suggested that because the respondents with acquired disabilities experienced a non-disabled childhood, and were exposed to high parental expectations and went to mainstream school, they had a wide range of educational and career options. Although many of these individuals became disabled in early adulthood, several had already graduated from university and become established in their careers. Others were fortunate enough to continue with their original career development plan, even after the acquisition of their impairment. For example, Priyesh, who acquired his impairment just prior to starting university, followed a significantly conventional career path, perceiving his choice of education to be the key to his occupational future. Further, as he chose to pursue a career in computing,

the acquisition of his impairment had no detrimental impact on his academic achievements or career success:

"When I went to Essex University I did a degree in computing because I knew that was the sort of career I wanted to go into."

As mentioned before in this chapter (section 6.1), only two of these respondents had to re-train and follow a completely new career path as a result of becoming disabled.

Two thirds (6 out of 9) of the women with congenital disabilities obtained educational qualifications that opened doors to their current occupations (e.g. degrees in law or computing). Sue, who qualified with a degree in law, which enabled her to work as a solicitor for many years, firmly believed:

"...The way my education panned out led inexorably to me going into the law."

A similar contention was presented by Caroline, a Speech and Language Therapist, who selected an undergraduate degree that would provide an opening to the career of her preference:

"My degree was in Speech and Language Therapy so I really use the basics of that everyday."

Celeste, an artistic director and dancer, was the only woman with an acquired disability who achieved academic qualifications that were direct prerequisites to her current career. Her education and training were so specialised that she is concerned that her professional horizons are very narrow and she is not able to do anything unrelated to the field of dance:

"...my dance education has been vital, if I hadn't done that I don't know what I would be doing today."

Even when the respondents' careers were not a direct manifestation of their subject of study, many perceived education to be significant to their current occupational and social life situation. As Annie, freelance journalist, contends:

"In a conventional sense, I haven't done what I have because of my education. But the fact that I was educated and the level of education I have has enabled me to do as much as I've done. The fact I did English as a degree and subjects in English and History has given me an articulateness, sense of structure, sense of plot, addiction to grammatical correctness, and use of language. My interest in history and folklore, stemming initially from my education, has been a great influence on the novels I have written."

Hazel, a vicar, regarded her educational career to be a critical antecedent of her employability and economic security:

"The opportunity to go to Loughborough and study Information Technology was a great opportunity at that time. I know that whatever I do I won't be unemployed. This actually gives me a lot of confidence because there is security. This all resulted from my education."

Furthermore she considers her degree in Theology to be the critical key which facilitated her with knowledge and training she required to meet her calling and to become a successful vicar.

**Table 6.4.3: Subject of highest qualification
& current occupational status**

Subject	Occupational Status
BSc degree in Philosophy, Psychology & Sociology	Actor
BA degree in Communication Studies	Sports Development Officer
BSc degree in Accounting & Economics	Financial Planning Advisor
Diploma in Dance	Dancer/Choreographer
Diploma in Theology	Curate
BA degree in Politics & Legislative Studies	Parliamentary Officer
A-Levels	TV Presenter/Singer
BSc degree in Social Sciences	Journalist/TV Critic/Author
MA in Theology	Church Minister
BSc degree in Computer Science	Senior Customer Support Analyst
MA in History & Politics	Labour Party MP
LLB (Hons) in Law	Solicitor
BA degree in English	Freelance Journalist
BA degree in Speech & Language Therapy	Speech & Language Therapist
BA in Sociology	Artistic Director of Theatre Company
M.B.A	Strategy Manager for Railtrack
BSc in Sports Science	Athlete/Development Officer for Paralympic Association
PhD in Computer Science	University Lecturer in Computer Science
MA in I.T., Bachelors in Theology	Vicar
BA(Hons) in Fine Art	Visual Artist/Education & Development Officer for Arts Council of England
BA in Modern European Studies	Project Manager for educational charity
Diploma in Contemporary Dance	Artistic Director/Dancer
BA in Politics & Art	Careers Officer
BA in Drama	Theatre Director
BSc in International Economics	Trade Finance Advisor
BA in Law, BA in Social Sciences, Diploma in Architecture	Lawyer [before acquisition of disability] Chartered Architect [after becoming disabled]
BSc in Computer Science	Computer Programmer/Analyst
LLB in Law	Barrister
PhD in Cosmology	University Professor of Physics
BSc in Economics	Management Accountant

6.4.2 Influences of segregated and mainstream education on careers

The majority of respondents in the current study were educated in an era when children with disabilities were placed into predominately segregated educational institutions which were considered to give them the intensive tuition they needed, and therefore 'a better start in life' (Simpson, 1990). However, according to the findings of the current study, segregated education was not favoured by all disabled people or by their parents. Some believed it to be a fundamental part of the discrimination process, creating and perpetuating artificial barriers between disabled children and their non-disabled peers. Twelve of the twenty respondents with congenital disabilities experienced mainstream education, either on a part-time or full-time basis. Eight of them were integrated throughout their educational career, although the remaining four had participated in a combination of segregated and mainstream institutions.

A few respondents went to residential educational institutions, either segregated or mainstream. However, residential schooling was perceived as a different type of schooling from day schooling and thus is discussed separately from the other two types of education. Although some of the issues uncovered were specific to residential education, there were a few overlaps.

In-depth analysis of the interviews highlighted several issues which are perceived as benefits and drawbacks of either mainstream or segregated/special education. The benefits of segregated education have been identified and are discussed below under the headings of:

- *Academically and Socially Supportive Environment*

- *Role Models*
- *Physical Access*

The drawbacks were:

- *Curriculum and Teaching Standards*
- *Isolation from the Local and Non-disabled Community*

The advantages of mainstream education were identified as:

- *Standards and Expectations*
- *Friendships and other relationships*
- *Competing in Economic Society*

Respondents recalled one major drawback of their experience of mainstream education:

- *Physical Accommodation.*

6.4.2.1: Segregated Education

Advantages of Segregated Education

1. Academically and socially supportive environment

Several of the respondents who were educated in establishments specifically for individuals with disabilities saw it as paramount to their career success. This was affirmed by Hazel, a vicar, who had been through the mainstream and segregated education system, but considered her years at Hereward College [a further education college for people with physical disabilities] to be a major positive influence on her career success,

"I went to a mainstream FE college for a year but it became difficult to cope, and that is when I was offered a place at Hereward where I stayed for 3 years. Going to

Hereward College was a big determinant. Without that push, the rest of my achievements wouldn't have happened."

Similarly, Dean, a sports development officer, believed it was his experience in segregated education that has moulded him into the person he has become:

"It made me more stronger, independent, competent and worldly wise. If I hadn't gone there I would be a completely different person. It also provided me the facilities and support I needed, in terms of physiotherapy, speech therapy, so I could maintain a healthy life."

Following this line of reasoning, segregated education was thought to facilitate the cultivation of the children's personality without the interruption of non-disabled barriers. As Dean comments:

"I was never exposed to the consequences of having a disability, because disability at school was never an issue."

Hazel also considered the experience of being in a supportive barrier-free environment to be critical to her initial character formation:

"the segregated school enabled my personality and character to flourish because I wasn't the 'different' person out of the 800 people in my school."

Dave considers that one of the unfortunate realities faced by disabled children integrated in mainstream school is being constantly reminded of their disability:

"They are pointed at as 'different' in mainstream schools"

This, in itself, could inhibit the establishment of social relationships, as was the case for Dean during his time at university:

"The barriers to form any kind of relationship seemed enormous. Nobody really had time for me and it suddenly made me realise who I was and what I was."

However although this encounter, and others like it in Dean's adulthood, did present him with challenges, the fact that most of his pre-adult years were spent in a supportive, encouraging and responsive environment where his individual cognitive and physical needs were met, means he had developed the ability to master and manipulate obstacles out of his way and did not feel intimidated by them. Therefore, in the respect, segregated education indeed had a positive influence on future success.

2. Role models

Another advantage of segregated education, according to John, one of the vicars, was that it provided role models to the younger generation of disabled people:

"Segregated education does give disabled people role models. Sadly, within a mainstream school there tends to be half a dozen disabled students in a population of 600-700. Where do you get positive role models? The message conveyed in mainstream schools is that the way to succeed is to be non-disabled because all your peers are not disabled. In segregated school you have disabled peers you can talk about your disability, challenges and obstacles. When I was at Treleors there were people who challenged me academically and people who were really good at wheelchair sport. So I had different role models for academia and how to use my wheelchair."

Sue also considered disabled role models to be important to the lives of young disabled people in terms of their outlook of life and their drive to achieve,

"I think that if you meet people who are 'worse' than you, medically speaking, it really does encourage you to be able to think you can do it too. I'm absolutely convinced that role models are important, and if disabled people aren't seen in sort of prominent roles and doing normal things then other disabled people lose out."

In this sense, therefore, segregated schools and colleges permit disabled young people to build relationships with each other, support, understand and encourage one another, and be able to empathise and learn from each other in terms of how to use their individual potential to succeed.

3. Physical access

Several respondents praised the physical architecture of special schools and colleges, maintaining that it permitted an enabling environment that was crucial to their developing independence. Furthermore it offered the respondents the freedom, as children, to explore their environment independent of non-disabled influences. Sue, now a retired solicitor, identified physical access to be the primary reason she left mainstream school to attend a school for disabled people,

“The reason why I moved to segregated school was because the sixth form was upstairs and I couldn't continue at my mainstream school. At my mainstream school, if I wanted to do Music, and sometimes French as well, we had to go to a classroom further up the hill. For me, this meant going through the caretaker's house. This wasn't easy.”

The inaccessible environment of mainstream school was evidenced by the experience of Gordon, a financial planner, who recalls:

“I had to go from home to an environment which is not very easy to function if you are in a wheelchair, because boarding schools are mainly in old Victorian properties, not designed for wheelchairs.”

Disadvantages of Segregated Education

1. Curriculum and teaching standard

Although many respondents favoured educational segregation, listening to the respondents' accounts of their personal experiences confirmed that there are definitely significant drawbacks to the special education system. Several respondents commented on the limited curriculum and the low standard of teaching in special schools. Sue pointed out:

"The maths teaching in my special school was so abominable. Although I was ahead and did maths O-Level early, I felt I would fail my maths A-level. The teacher couldn't even answer the questions, let alone teach me what the right answers were!"

Sue's sister, Alice expressed an equal disappointment at the standard of teaching in her school, and both sisters implied that their own potential to progress into prestigious high status employment of their choice was suppressed by the school's low quality of education and limited curriculum:

"The teachers appeared, in retrospect, to have been cast offs; the curriculum was really really narrow. When I started there I repeated work, for about the first 2 years, that I had already done twice and it was hopeless. When I came to choose O-Levels there was a choice of about five that could be done within the school and a couple that could be done next door, at the grammar school."

The limited choice of subjects available in special schools inevitably had a significant influence on the respondents' occupational status. The respondents' reports imply that

their original career aspirations did not always correspond to what their schooling permitted them to achieve. This was the case for Sue:

"I wanted to become a Graphologist so I took up the relevant subjects at my mainstream school, but when we moved I realised I wasn't going to become a Graphologist, because there wasn't any related subjects at my segregated school."

The standard of education and the expectations special schools had of disabled children during the 1960s-70s were exceedingly poor, as indicated by Nabil, whose primary, secondary and further education was segregated and residential:

"With segregated education, they have a particular attitude about you as a disabled person. They don't expect anything of you. The education you receive is different and poor quality. I left school at 16 with 2 CSEs which was the most that was offered. Just me and one other guy from that school took them."

2. Isolation from the local & non-disabled community

A further negative aspect of segregated schools/colleges is that they have a catchment area of 100 square miles or more, so children have to be transported out of their local community which impedes potential friendships between disabled and non-disabled peers. Furthermore, these children may experience long travelling times, sometimes of up to two hours a day. This was the situation of Peter, a computer analyst, who, due to his physical impairment, was taken out of his local school and placed into a school for 'delicate children':

"This school was on the other side of Birmingham and I had a coach journey everyday from home to school and visa versa. I was picked up from outside the house, so it was door to door, picking up other disabled people on the way."

Dave, a dancer, expresses a similar point:

"From the age of 5 to 16 I went to a school for physically disabled children. It is on the other side of town so I had to go to and fro in a cab everyday."

This problem is worse for children who are boarders. They will experience the negative effects of being uprooted and distanced from their family and childhood home environment. Such was contended by several disabled high-flyers:

"Special schools took children from all over the country and you were separated from your home, so when you left school your friends were from all over the place. In this estate for example, kids go to the local school so when they leave school they still have their friends. Also you're not exposed to non-disabled people and the experiences they have."

The social aspect of being away at boarding school was quite negative for Mandy, a theatre director, who confesses that:

"I probably enjoyed the social experience less, being away from home, being ill, being bullied."

Peter (computer analyst) also did not like the fact the he had to go to a Further Education college in a different city to his home and was not integrating with the non-disabled community:

"The college was residential which meant I was living away from home, although I did come home quite frequently. But I conceived Hereward as quite a isolating environment, with purely disabled students there."

6.4.2.2 Residential Education (Segregated)

Career and academic development aside, a few respondents, especially those who experienced residential education, maintained that segregated education had made a

crucial contribution to their social and cognitive development. For Dean, a sports development officer, who has a congenital disability, boarding school not only cultivated his academic potential but also, as he reflects:

"It took me away from my little house in South Wales, where there were certainly no job opportunities for me and I would have been treated like a five year old for the rest of my life. Being away at school obviously gave me access to a wider range of people from a variety of different backgrounds, and the opportunity to gain real life experiences. This contributed to the whole learning experience."

However, although eleven of the respondents experienced residential education, either school or college or both, not all experiences of residential education were positive as is exemplified by an author and TV critic, Chris, who comments:

"My secondary school was also residential for kids with Cerebral Palsy. From the age of 11 to 18 you were forced to be on your own. Some people may like that, but I certainly didn't, not because it was segregated but because it forced you away from home at a very early age. I don't approve of that for anyone, disabled or not."

As mentioned before, being away from home at boarding school proved to be quite a socially isolating experience for Mandy, a theatre director, who recalls feeling isolated:

"...because of being ill which meant I couldn't go to school as I had to spend the whole day in bed and on my own."

6.4.2.3: Mainstream Education

As stated previously, twelve of the twenty respondents with congenital disabilities attended mainstream establishments, either for part or the whole of their educational career. Only one of these attended boarding school.

Like segregated education, being integrated into mainstream schools engenders both positive and negative experiences for the disabled individual.

Advantages of Mainstream Education

1. Standards & Expectations

Several respondents who attended mainstream schools, both private and public, day and residential, conceptualised it as a significant driving force to achieve the standards required to compete in a predominately non-disabled employment market. On reflection of his experience at a private mainstream boarding school, Gordon, financial planner, postulated:

“It gave me bags of confidence to know that I could achieve things, and, from a educational point of view, it gave me all the exam success that you could ever hope for. I was lucky that I was always in an environment where the expectations to achieve were so much higher than in most other schools. And everyone came out with good grades, good exams and a very very broad breadth of educational achievement, and that was always well looked on by the next school, the university, employers.”

This was not dissimilar to the experience of Tanni, a successful athlete, who found that her mainstream comprehensive schooling instilled her with the drive and perseverance to achieve, and not to fear failure:

“...we were encouraged to do as much as we were able to whatever level you were at and that was fine. That encouraged me and taught me, from a young age, that it

was OK to work and try to do something well, it didn't matter if you failed but it was more important to actually try to do it.

Being in that school environment taught me to be really ambitious, to be able to set goals so actually I started thinking about competing for Britain from when I was about 12 years old."

The differential expectations of mainstream and segregated institutions were evidenced by the comment of Mat, an established actor and singer. He was sent to a mainstream private school where, he maintains:

"I was taught to expect a lot more than many other disabled people, partly because of the school I went to and slightly because of the social surroundings around my impairment. I was in quite a posh school. I wasn't asked to sew blankets as were special school equivalents, although they are different now to what they were then. But for my generation at school, mid to late 70s, like Nabil Shaban, the expectations were 'be lucky if you get an O'Level mate'. Pathetic! Although it is hard to be in a mainstream school, it's worth it."

However, as Annie, a freelance journalist, pointed out below, although mainstream environments are known to offer a more diverse curriculum and encourage high levels of achievement, they also must have the right ingredients to cultivate and support the academic potential of disabled individuals:

"Whenever I'm in a smaller pond, I tend to rise to the top of it. Whenever I went into a big area I just sank! I went to Manchester University very briefly but didn't do very well because I didn't manage in self-catering accommodation in the middle of a big city. But Dulwich School, Loughborough Convent and Nottingham University

were three places where I could do very well without being patronised because it was a small enough place for my abilities to be recognised."

2. Friendships & other relationships

It has been argued that inclusive education permits the establishment of social relationships between disabled and non-disabled peers as awareness and understanding of disability is said to engender an increasing acceptance of it. Gordon believes his time in integrated education taught him some critical lessons of how to become accepted and valued in mainstream society:

"I was expected to do what everybody else did. If I didn't I would feel left out, so I just got on and did it. The other boys could see that I could achieve what they could achieve and there was nothing special about me and also, at that age, they quickly realised that you can put up with the rough and tumble and the teasing and the physical fights, and that I was just like the other boys except in a wheelchair."

Mick's comment below demonstrates that integration is important to the reduction of discrimination and the maintenance of positive relationships between disabled and non-disabled peers:

"I remember being in the cloakroom once and a kid started calling me names so I kicked him very hard several times until he was on the floor in tears. He then, became my best friend! I realised that my able-bodied friends were no more special than I was. Mainstream education is good for disabled people to learn that non-disabled people aren't better than them."

Annie's experience exemplifies how integration is a two way learning process and, with the right people and the right attitudes, can be very positive:

"I started off in a mixed school, both sexes, where people could say what they like and I wasn't protected. But it ended up that I made a good circle of friends and they would black the eye of anyone who was rude to or about me."

The varied mainstream education experienced by Caroline, a speech and language therapist, taught her some valuable lessons about cultural diversity, flexibility and being aware of individual potential. This invariably influenced her current perspective on life, both professionally and socially:

"I kept going to new schools as I had to get used to meeting different people, making friends in different places and not being fixed with the same people all my life. I think that was a very healthy experience which I think has set me up for the moves I have had to make in my adult life, i.e. jobs, house etc."

3. Competing in economic society

Gordon, a financial planner, and several other respondents conceived the lessons taught through their integrated education, both formal and informal, to be critical to their successful participation in mainstream economic society:

"I think, it's that attitude that's been so important later on and that's why I'm a very great believer in integrated education. It's only in that, that the individual can feel they're important, they have a role in normal society and believe they can achieve what everyone else can achieve."

Mick, a television presenter, who favoured mainstream education and societal equality, asserted a similar view, pointing out:

"Disabled people need to be taught the same as their non-disabled counterparts in order to compete with them in today's economic society."

Disadvantages of Mainstream Education

1. Physical accommodation

As mentioned above, several of the respondents were educated in mainstream institutions where few, if any, adaptations were made. They admitted feeling frustrated and disadvantaged by the inaccessible accommodation. Dean, a sports development officer, explained how engaging in simple social activities could be a major undertaking:

“Ordering a pint of beer from the Student Union bar was a battle in itself. There was first the physical access problem of getting into the bar, then getting past all the people, then getting myself heard at the bar...”

Peter recalls how his time at a mainstream comprehensive was a physically challenging experience:

“My 12-16 years schooling was at the local comprehensive. 2 main buildings, 200 yards apart, with 3 floors on one, 4 on the other, and no lift. We had to change classrooms a number of times a day. Boy was I fit or what!”

Furthermore he was initially denied the option of pursuing a certain degree at a university of his choice due to potential access problems:

“We had to fight to get a place on the Computer Science course at Staffordshire University. Initially the guy I had spoken to, on the phone, turned me down, not through lack of grades but because I was disabled. So we had to go up there and show them I could walk around and there really wasn't a problem.”

Physical access is an issue in all aspects of society, and can cause unnecessary restrictions to the career development of some disabled people. Two of the actors in the sample, both with a congenital disability, were rejected from drama school and

denied the opportunity to be trained in the conventional way. As Mat, an actor and singer, explains:

“For my generation drama school was a no. In my day, you just assumed their courses wouldn’t be accessible and accepted it.”

Mick, also a singer as well as a television presenter, believed that his career development had been restrained by inaccessible physical accommodation:

“The only thing about education that has influenced my career is that I didn’t go to university. As I have gone through my life I have found that this has gone against me in a lot of situations. When it was my time to go to university I had only one option which was Durham because it was the only accessible university. I wanted to go to university in London, but nowhere was accessible.”

6.4.3 Conclusion of 6.4:- Education

The evidence, generated through content analysis, suggests that education played an important role in the career success of all 31 respondents in the sample. A large proportion of the sample were university graduates. Several respondents, especially those who acquired their impairment in adulthood and went to mainstream schools, pursued degrees which would lead them directly into employment with a similar focus. Those who had opted for degrees with no direct link to their current occupation, nonetheless identified their years within the education system to have been critical to their social, cognitive and professional development. It gave them an opportunity to develop relationships, to learn how to become articulate in spoken and written language, and to obtain qualifications that would open doors to professional opportunities. Such findings support existing research demonstrating the positive correlation of education on employment. As suggested by the Warnock Report (1978), education prepares individuals to become economically participative members of society by teaching them the formal and informal skills necessary to pursue a valuable position in the labour force.

The evidence also implies that individuals with congenital disabilities are less likely to pursue academic subjects of their choice due to restrictions imposed by the physical environment and also the limited curriculum. Official statistics available from DfEE (1982), and a study by Walker (1982) suggest that whether children with physical impairments attend segregated or integrated education they are less likely to attain the same academic qualifications as their non-disabled peers.

The types of educational institutions attended by the respondents were either segregated, that is specifically for individuals with disabilities, or mainstream (public or private). Some of the respondents with congenital disabilities were participants of both systems of education. Segregated education was considered, by them, to provide a supportive environment that permitted the cultivation of disabled children's personalities without the constraints of non-disabled barriers. Furthermore the resources and facilities it provided, e.g. physiotherapy, speech therapy, computer assisted devices, physical access to all corners of the building, were all reported as essential for the children to explore and develop into healthy independent adults. According to Pearse (1996) segregated institutions are integral ingredients to the social and psychological independence of disabled children. As Jenkinson (1997) postulates, the segregated school is more supportive, both physically and socially, and less threatening to students with disabilities than the regular school, encouraging the feeling of security and enhancing their self-esteem by avoiding continual comparison of their achievements with other students, and being supported by a peer group with whom they share similar needs.

However, the respondents opposed to educational segregation asserted that it only served to perpetuate discrimination and create artificial protection which would serve to isolate disabled individuals when they have to leave the security of the education system to enter into mainstream society. They argued that segregated education prevented disabled children from interacting with non-disabled peers, thus inhibiting social integration between the disabled and non-disabled world. This is consistent with Barnes (1991) who asserts that disabled children who attend segregated schools normally stay there until their late teens, and are therefore denied the experiences

considered essential for the transition from childhood to adulthood and are shielded from the realities of society.

The findings also suggested that segregated establishments offered an extremely limited curriculum, delivered by teachers who were referred to by some respondents as 'cast-offs'. This was perceived as detrimental to the employment prospects of the students of such institutions, who may be victims of underemployment due to their limited training. Again this is evidenced in previous literature, e.g. Jenkinson (1997) expresses a cause for concern at the lack of training and experience of most special school teachers delivering the secondary curriculum. This is anticipated as an increasing handicap as students with disabilities move into adolescence.

Proponents of integration, e.g. Wertheimer, 1997, contend that mainstream education inevitably facilitates the formation and maintenance of social relationships between disabled and non-disabled peers. This can be supported by the current research which demonstrated that disabled students who attended mainstream school were presented with an equal training to their non-disabled counterparts and, therefore, were qualified to compete with them in mainstream economic society.

Physical access, however, was identified as a significantly problematic factor for the majority of respondents who attended mainstream education and felt that it seemed to impinge on their freedom of choice. These findings have surfaced in previous arguments concerning inclusive education. As Jenkinson (1997) and Barnes (1991) maintain, the integration of disabled students into mainstream schools may indeed mean access to a broader curriculum and thus increased career opportunities, but it

could also breed social rejection and exclusion due to the lack of common traits between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Furthermore, even now, mainstream schools are not fully physically accessible. Such discrimination, either physically or attitudinally, can be seriously damaging to the individuals' self-confidence and esteem, contributing to the construction of their disabled identities and constraining them to act in particular ways (Allan, 1999).

A further significant finding concerned the gender differences in level of education among the respondents with congenital disabilities. All of the women in this subgroup had graduated from university, and several had postgraduate qualifications. Conversely, only approximately two thirds of their male counterparts had been qualified to degree level. Such findings are not dissimilar to the data on non-disabled high-flyers. A comparison on level of education between the successful women in White et al's (1992) study and the male high-flyers in Cox & Cooper's (1988) research indicated that the women were better qualified than the men. Such a difference between the men and women could be attributed to personal choice of the respondents. The narratives show that a small number of the men with congenital disabilities preferred not to go to university if it meant compromising their own choices and settling for the secondary options available to them.

6.5:- Theme 5: Conceptions of Success

Introduction

The research findings reported in this section suggest that, for this group of disabled professionals, as a whole, the notion of success is construed primarily in terms of internal criteria which cannot be measured objectively. This is contrary to previous work on non-disabled professionals which adopts the view that an individual's career success is measured on the basis of relatively objective and visible career accomplishments, using the metrics of pay and ascendancy (London & Stumpf, 1982; Judge & Betz, 1994). The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 offers several reasons why disabled people may define their success more in terms of internal criteria, including the existence of physical and structural barriers in the mainstream workplace, and society's low expectations of disabled people.

The findings examine the criteria which disabled high-flyers use to describe what success means to them, and expresses them in terms of five internal and two external criteria for success which were identified through content analysis.

Descriptions of the five internal criteria, illustrated by a quote, are as follows:

Personal satisfaction/happiness - being happy and satisfied with oneself, one's work and one's life in general:

"if I'm happy then I'm successful."

Achievement – having succeeded in achieving one's personal goals:

"I have won a fair number of races so I can say I've been able to just work as well as I can and do the best that I can."

Service - helping others by doing a good job:

"it gives me pleasure in doing something for somebody else and knowing they are going get pleasure from that for the rest of their lives!"

Personal development - the expansion of one's personal capacity and experiences:

"my goals are continuously being rescheduled throughout my life. I am progressing from one goal to another. Sometimes they are far reaching goals."

Equality - being treated on equal terms to colleagues of the same stature:

"success is, being treated as an equal by others"

Two external criteria, perceived as objective and visible career accomplishments, measured against the metrics of pay and ascendancy, were also identified as:

Career Progression - achieving increasing respect, prestige and power by climbing the occupational ladder:

"Success is having a career where you can go from strength to strength, where you can progress."

Material wealth - earning enough money to be able to live a comfortable and healthy lifestyle; being able to afford the goods and services to do so:

"It means getting some periods of quality of life and being able to stop working in the next couple of years with enough money to enjoy myself."

The variation in the ways that the male and female respondents, and those with congenital and acquired disabilities, describe what success means to them is discussed below. For instance, the findings suggest that the female respondents with acquired disabilities were more inclined to see their success in terms of personal happiness and being satisfied in whatever they were doing, rather than personal development and progressing up the career ladder. It also became apparent that respondents with congenital impairments were more concerned with personal development and obtaining societal equality compared to their counterparts with acquired disabilities. It is worth noting, however, that these findings are based on a small and unequal sample (i.e. twenty respondents with congenital disabilities, eleven with acquired disabilities), and thus may be different if the sample size was bigger.

Table 6.5 (below) shows how many of the thirty-one respondents conceptualised success in terms of each of the seven criteria identified:

Table 6.5: Respondents' conceptions of success

Respondent Group	INTERNAL CRITERIA					EXTERNAL CRITERIA	
	Achieving Personal Goals	Personal Happiness/Satisfaction	Service	Equality	Personal Development	Career Progress	Material Wealth
M/A ¹	6	5	3	0	1	2	2
M/C ²	7	4	4	4	3	4	2
F/A ³	2	3	1	1	0	0	0
F/C ⁴	5	5	3	1	2	1	0
TOTAL	20	17	11	6	6	7	4

¹ Males with acquired disabilities = 8

² Males with congenital disabilities = 11

³ Females with acquired disabilities = 3

⁴ Females with congenital disabilities = 9

6.5.1 Internal Criteria

1. Achieving Personal Goals

A large percentage of respondents in this group perceived success in terms of achieving personal goals. They presented extensive evidence of their achievements in their interviews, but they considered their achievements as successful only when they believed they had worked to the best of their ability to meet their achieved goals.

Just under two thirds of the men in the group referred to the achievement of personal goals as a component part of their conceptions of career success. For example, according to Nabil, an established actor, success means:

“achieving the goals you set out.”

Likewise, Graig, a church minister affirms:

“Success, to me, means doing what I'm meant to do to the best of my ability.”

Priyesh, a computer programmer and analyst, defines success in terms of completing a project:

“when you have finished a project, when you know you have done it well, and when you see it working”

Seven out of the eleven women in the group measured success in terms of the extent of their achievements. For example, Ann, a Labour Party MP, saw her success as,

“...doing what I set out to do.”

This is consistent with Caroline, a speech & language therapist, who also saw success as being personally satisfied, contended:

“Success for me means achieving my own personal aims and some element of satisfaction.”

Many women believed their sense of achievement came from them working as hard as they could to do the best they could. As Tanni, an athlete, pointed out:

“The achievement I feel depends on whether I feel I have had a good race or a bad race or I’ve done something the best that I can. For example, some of the races I have won are not my best races because I don’t feel I did as well as I could have done.”

This perception was shared by Annie, a journalist, who stated:

“Success means doing things that I’m proud of, and that I know are the best I can do”.

2. Personal Happiness/Satisfaction

As indicated in Table 6.5, just over half (55%) of the respondents conceived success to mean being happy and satisfied with their current life situation. Typical responses were:

“Success, for me, is being happy in what I’m doing.” or “personal happiness is what I perceive as success..”

Stephen, a university professor, perceived success as being happy by living a full life and having the ability to satisfy his life goals and responsibilities.

Mat, currently an actor and formally a drummer, demonstrated how his definition of success changed with time and experience. He claims:

“Success, now, means to know oneself and to be happy with oneself. I spent 15 years trying to do something which there was no way I was going to do because of society being the way it is, and as soon as I was free of that desire I found that a success.”

Over half of the women with congenital disabilities and all three of the women with acquired disabilities identified personal happiness/satisfaction as fundamental to their current success. As Mandy declares:

"I'm successful in that generally I'm happy. I'm happy, I'm doing something that I believe in and get paid for it."

Damien believes, for her, success is bound up with personal happiness,

"I suppose if I'm happy then I'm successful."

Two women placed significant importance on being satisfied and proud with their accomplishments. As Celeste, the artistic director of a dance company, believes:

"Success means having satisfaction in what I'm doing."

3. Service

Just under a third of the overall sample defined their success in terms of serving others. Seven out of nineteen males declared that success, to them, was about being of service to others by doing a good job. Needless to say, these included the two vicars.

As Craig stated:

"I determine success as being a service to others"

Chris, a TV critic and author, believes that his success will come only after he has made a difference to society:

"I want to make a change to help the old. I want to help to make a change for the better. My aim in life is to help our community as much as I can."

Barry, an architect, felt successful if he had helped another person live comfortably in an enabling environment:

“Success, to me, means achieving what I set out to achieve for other people more than for myself. Success, for me, is seeing somebody able to use their house and built environment.”

Similarly, Fadul, a barrister, felt successful by being of service to his country. He says he needs to

“... feel I do make a certain contribution to the welfare of my country.”

Ann, a M.P., who, as seen before, was very achievement orientated, said:

“I need to know and feel that the things I do will make life better for other people, to be of service to the public.”

Sue, a retired solicitor, expressed a similar view, believing that it is important to have a purposeful role in society. To her, success was about:

“Feeling that you are actually doing something that is useful and not wasting your energies on the desert air.”

Damien perceived success to be about:

“...doing something I can do well so I can give something to other people”.

Although the other respondents did not identify service as a primary component of their success, they felt the other criteria were a better reflection of their own perceptions of success. However, they did feel it was important to work hard and be committed. For instance, Celeste felt her position as Artistic Director of a dance company called for her to do a good job for the company to be successful.

4. Equality

Only a small number of the disabled high-flyers measured success in terms of equality. The majority of these were men with congenital disabilities who considered

themselves successful if they were treated on an equal level to their non-disabled counterparts, be they colleagues, peers or siblings. Peter defined success as:

“Being accepted within the normal bounds of industry, business and everyday life. Not to be left behind. Acceptance by the population, by the community.”

Gordon, a financial planner, expressed a similar concern and saw his success in terms of achievement. He felt it to be important:

“to achieve the same goals as my friends and colleagues achieve and not to fall behind, but not necessarily to be any better than they are.”

Two women were concerned with gaining equality as a means of being successful. As Alice maintained:

“success is, being treated as an equal by others I regard as successful.”

Celeste, who worked to the best of her ability in order for Candoco to be successful, felt that true success was about being included and competing within mainstream society:

“We're an integrated dance company so we didn't want to belong to any camp, we wanted to be in mainstream.”

Although the men with acquired disabilities did not believe that being successful meant being considered as equal to non-disabled counterparts, one of them stated that it was important not to allow issues surrounding his disability compromise his life choices:

“Success means I am not sensitive or ashamed of my disability. Occasionally people talk over me, the ‘does he take sugar’ treatment but it doesn't upset me. I just feel: if they only realised.”

5. Personal Development

Personal development was perceived to be important to only six respondents' conception of success. The majority of these had childhood disabilities. Peter, a computer analyst, who was also concerned with being seen as equal to his non-disabled colleagues, referred to success as a thirst for knowledge and perpetual progression which, he explains:

"is satisfied by my in-house training, learning and taking courses which contribute to my personal and professional progression."

Dave, a dancer, saw his work as a vehicle with which he could grow and become proficient in new arenas of competence. He welcomed change and challenge which, he felt, ignited hard work and inspiration, in turn, breeding success:

"I am always trying to find new things for myself to, just to see if I can do them. For example the work we are doing at the moment, experimenting with voice and text.

It's something new, and that inspires me and makes me try harder."

Fadul was the only respondent with an acquired impairment who perceived success in terms of developing personal capacities and experiences. He considers perpetual personal development to be crucial to feed the human body and mind, and for people to survive in an ever-changing world:

"If a person feels they have attained their required goals and desired destinations then he has to die".

Personal development was only mentioned by two women with childhood disabilities, in relation to definitions of success. Ann, the MP, was also concerned with achieving and doing well, said:

"If I can do something today that I couldn't do yesterday then I'm better off.

Success is actually about taking the next step forward."

Tanni, the wheelchair athlete, believes that each achievement is coupled with new opportunities to learn and develop, and success is about taking advantage of these opportunities:

"...playing in Barcelona as an athlete has changed things. Because I did well in Barcelona it changed the way I was treated and what is asked of me is much nicer as a result of that. I was then suddenly asked to be involved in lots of things like working for the sports council in Wales and some military panels and being invited to places as an athlete."

The data indicates that the disabled high-flyers were primarily concerned with subjective success, defining it primarily in terms of internal criteria.

6.5.2 External Criteria

Just under half of the respondents mentioned being concerned with objective success as indicated by career progression and material wealth. However, they also had their own internal success criteria and, like the other respondents, believed they had achieved success once they had satisfied these internal criteria.

1. Career Progression

Seven respondents in the group perceived climbing the career ladder and achieving prestigious positions in the occupational hierarchy as significant to their conception of success. For example Peter, whose occupational status of Senior Computer Analyst evidences his thirst for advancement, contends:

"I have done this job for a number of years, about 8/9 years, more or less doing the same job but the responsibilities have got stronger and harder. My career has progressed in that it certainly hasn't gone backwards."

A similar view was expressed by Dean, a sports development officer for disabled people, who maintains success means:

"Getting into a career where you can go from strength to strength, where you can progress"

Priyesh, also concerned with achieving personal goals, declared:

"I think there's still things I'd like to do, and goals I would like to meet to go further in my career."

Bill, a trade finance advisor, indicated his concern with career progression in his quote:

"in the early years every time I thought about moving they made me an offer of promotion I couldn't refuse."

Only one woman measured success in terms of career progression. Annalu's status of university lecturer is indicative of her preoccupation with career advancement as she spent years studying and achieving qualifications to reach her current status. Her view of success can be described as significantly objective in that it is concerned with status. As she maintains:

"The first time I really thought 'yes I've made it' was when I got appointed to this job because 1) Lectureships are hard to come by, 2) being appointed internally is very difficult, 3) being given a permanent post is outright unheard of! After that I thought people must view what I do as important. It has given me a relatively high status and it is what I'm meant to be doing, therefore I think I am successful".

However, although Celeste did not define her personal success in terms of hierarchical advancement, she was concerned with building her company up to make it a universal success. It was only then that she would have achieved a personal sense of success. As her statement reveals:

“Success is to find ourselves [Candoco], seven years down the road, being an international touring company in the main dance arena.”

2. Material Wealth

Just four males described their success in terms of material wealth. Mat, an actor, also concerned with career progression, commented:

“success, for me, with my middle class up-bringing and thus middle class aspirations in terms of material wealth, means material wealth equivalent to someone like a junior doctor.”

Mick, the TV presenter and singer/songwriter, firmly believed:

“I would have succeeded when I start getting paid my worth.”

Bill, the trade finance advisor, supported the ‘work to live’ ethos, believing that as well as earning a respectable income and status, success is about being able to enjoy and benefit from these achievements in other aspects of his life. He considers success as:

“...being able to stop working in the next couple of years with enough money to enjoy myself while I'm still fit enough.”

None of the women mentioned material wealth when defining their meaning of success.

It is evident that a couple of the success criteria identified are strikingly similar to the identified patterns of motivation reported in section 6.3, i.e. achievement and money. Therefore it can be argued that there is a strong connection between what motivates these disabled people and how they perceive success.

6.5.3 Conclusions of 6.5:- Conceptions of Success

The findings reported in this section clearly show that career success is a concept far more complex than many writers on careers have suggested (e.g. O'Reilly and Chairman, 1994; Melamed, 1995). It cannot simply be represented in the external terms of hierarchical position and level of pay because this is not how disabled high-flyers see it; in reality they use a far wider criteria to define their own career success. This conclusion reflects the work of Sturges (1996), who has examined what success means to managers and discovered that the majority of her sample defined success in terms of internal criteria, although a small number of managers did view success more closely to the conventional notions of what it means. This research illustrates that career success, for disabled high-flyers is a concept which involves two large dimensions: *internal* and *external*, each of which are composed of smaller themes.

The findings indicated the importance of internal criteria of success for disabled professionals' definitions of success. They found that the internal dimension of career success for the 31 disabled high-flyers was made up of 5 criteria: *achievement of personal goals; personal happiness/satisfaction; service; personal development, and equality*. The cogency of the internal criteria identified is borne out by the findings of previous research that examined managerial values or looked at what professionals wanted from their careers. For example Cox & Cooper (1988) showed the MDs in their study to attribute significant value to *achievement*, while White et al (1992) found that the successful women in their study sought to do a good job for others, and thus were particularly concerned with *service*.

Internal criteria were shown to be an extremely important part of the high-flyers' conceptions of career success. All of the respondents mentioned at least one of the five internal criteria of success when constructing their personal definition of success. The most frequently mentioned internal criteria of success was *achieving personal goals* which was considered significant by twenty of the respondents, at least three from each of the four sub-groups. Only a small number of respondents included external criteria in their definitions of career success. The *Career progression* criterion was only mentioned by seven respondents (six men and one woman) when defining their success, and *material wealth* was mentioned by only four men. The findings showed that none of the women with acquired disabilities perceived career success in terms of external criteria.

These findings are consistent with earlier research (e.g. Korman et al, 1981) which suggests that many managers do not use the external criteria of position and pay alone to delineate career success in their own terms. Sturges (1996) discovered that the older managers and the women in her study tended to view success more in terms of their own internal criteria of achievement and accomplishment rather than in terms of pay and hierarchical position. She suggests that this could be explained by the delayering of organisations, and the shift in psychological contact between employer and employee has caused individuals to rethink what success means to them. If the perception is that hierarchical success is no longer available to certain individuals, they might resort to other, more attainable and potentially more valid models of success. This could be the case for the group of disabled people, some of who may be victims of glass ceiling advancement in their employment or have boundaryless careers.

1. Gender differences in conceptions of success

The evidence indicates that the gender of the respondents had an influence on their conceptualisation of success. Although overall, respondents were more likely to define success in terms of internal as opposed to external criteria, female high-flyers had a stronger tendency to define success in terms of internal criteria, and were more likely, than men, to mention personal happiness/satisfaction as important to their idea of success. Conversely, more men than women considered external criteria for success to be central to their ideas of career success. This is consistent with the findings of existing career success research, particularly Sturges (1999) who found that the women in her study were more likely than the men to describe what success meant to them with reference to internal criteria. Further, Sturges (1999) and Russo et al (1991) indicated that non-disabled men were more likely than women to measure success in terms of salary and position in the occupational hierarchy. By comparing the literature on non-disabled male high-flyers with what this study has discovered about disabled male high-flyers, it can be seen that the two groups have a differential sense of entitlement, in that more disabled men define success in terms of internal criteria. This could be explained by the fact that society holds different expectations for upward mobility for employees with and without disabilities. As Miller (1991) argued, society often expect disabled individuals to be satisfied just to be employed.

However, in the current study, both men and women conceived their success in terms of being happy and satisfied in whatever they were doing. Furthermore, just as shown in other work (e.g. Sturges, 1996; Cox & Cooper, 1988), it was discovered that men and women both valued the achievement of personal goals.

2. The effects of onset of disability on subjective conceptions of success

Onset of disability did not have a major influence on the respondents' perceptions of success. It is possible that this has been influenced by the fact that the number of people in each sub-group is small. However, the findings show that the respondents with congenital disabilities expressed a slightly stronger concern with personal development and equality than did the respondents who acquired their impairment later in life. A possible explanation for this may be that the respondents with acquired disabilities had already defined success as a non-disabled person prior to their life as a disabled person. For example, according to previous studies based on non-disabled high-flyers, women are more likely to define success in terms of being happy. This is true for all three women in this study who acquired their disability in early adulthood.

Although the women with congenital disabilities were also concerned with personal happiness, they placed an emphasis on service and personal development. Further, a number of men and woman with congenital disabilities believed success to be about being on an occupational and social equilibrium with their non-disabled contemporaries. This was not an issue for respondents with acquired disabilities who, it may be argued, had already experienced non-disabled status and, for most, this status remained. As Sutherland (1981) maintains, individuals who acquired disabilities in adult life have much more power than those with congenital disabilities, in terms of factors such as money, legal status, position in the social structure, and experiences in dealing with encounters with other people. This makes it easier to reject attempts made to coerce them into conforming to a stereotypical role of disabled person with second class expectations.

6.6:- OVERALL CONCLUSION THE THEMES

The findings presented in this chapter served to show that the disabled high-flyers' perceived their career development and conception of career success to be influenced by their childhood, education, personality and motivation, career choices and turning points, and of course their disability. Whilst the themes were discussed separately throughout this chapter, there does appear to be some level of interdependence between them which will be explored here, in the conclusion.

The above evidence suggests that potential career success in adulthood begins with the experiences of childhood, thus supporting John Milton's words,

'Childhood shows the man as the morning shows the day'

The majority of respondents, regardless of their gender or onset of disability reported that they were supported and encouraged, during their childhood, to explore their environment and do anything which made them happy. Several respondents were nurtured within backgrounds emphasising the value of hard work and doing well in whatever they chose to do. This philosophy was perceived to have a significant influence on the group's personal conceptions of success and their future motivations, both of which were primarily internal.

Early adverse experiences of challenge, personal trauma and having to cope independently with the environment engendered a strong sense of competence and self-confidence in the successful disabled people who learned that their successes and failures were dependent on their own behaviour. Frequent periods of hospitalisation, and separation from parents was perceived to have a significant influence on the development of some of the individuals. This is considered to aid the development of

a tolerance to frustration in problem-solving and may well be crucial in dealing with stress in later life. Kets de Vries (1980) has suggested that the lack of cohesive parental images, such as those said to be experienced by a number of the disabled people, can lead to identity diffusion, followed by a desire to control an environment which in childhood has proved unpredictable. Furthermore a separation from parents, either through moving to boarding school or their death, is thought to engender a need for achievement which was demonstrated by the disabled people's stories of their career development and success.

Disability had a causal impact on child-rearing practices, overriding gender, thus inevitably having a significant influence on the high-flyers' future career choices and direction of development. The females with congenital disabilities were not particularly directed to pursue gender-specific options in life, but rather supported and encouraged to do whatever made them happy. This was largely due to the fact that it was not known whether they would live to experience adulthood and whether they would be able to live independently. It could be argued that non-sexist socialisation practises would allow experimentation with a diverse set of roles, rather than forcing women into prescribed gender typical roles. Such was evident by the stories of the women with congenital disabilities who were more likely to pursue gender atypical careers than the women who had acquired their impairment during their adult life and recalled that they had been influenced by gender socialisation during their childhood. This demonstrates an inter-relationship between childhood and career choices and progression

Most of the disabled high-flyers had an internal belief that success results from hard work and that failure is the individual's responsibility. Consistent with Cox & Cooper's (1988) MDs and White et al's (1992) successful women, the high-flyers in the current research perceived themselves as self-controlled as opposed to being controlled by others, expecting rewards to be contingent on their behaviour rather than on external factors such as luck or chance. It is probable that 'internality' is a key factor in determining the extent of career success achieved. Several disabled high-flyers, particularly the women, felt that luck was important to their career success, but they attributed their success primarily to hard work, tenacity and a willingness to take advantage of the opportunities that luck presented.

Internal locus of control is not only engendered by warm and supportive parenting styles. In the case of several disabled high-flyers separation, from parents and the need to cope independently, and to develop the confidence to battle against the barriers of a non-disabled society led to the exploration of cause-and-effect relations, and the development of self as a causative agent.

The disabled high-flyers were primarily intrinsically motivated, seeking to maximise their satisfaction through the responsibility, challenge and learning derived from the task itself. A large number of them were motivated, by previous successful achievements, to keep their goal posts moving and strive to achieve future ambitions. The disabled people's competence, evidenced by their stories about previous accomplishments and experience of psychological success, should raise their self-efficacy beliefs, and the setting of more challenging goals in the future. Therefore just

as White et al (1992) believed about the successful women in their study, this thesis suggests that, in the case of the disabled high-flyers, success generates success.

Several respondents were motivated by the purposefulness of the task, in terms of how it provided them with a purpose in society and moral satisfaction from doing a good job for others. Many saw work as a means by which they could prove their worth, as disabled people, to society. This supports Jahoda (1982) who maintains that employment gives people a sense of participating in a wider collective purpose. Furthermore, the majority of the sample considered themselves to have a high level of career centrality, indicated by the amount of time they expended on work related activities, their focus on long term rather than short term goals, and their perception of work being central to their self-image.

Several of the disabled people, especially the women and the professional artists, claimed to be externally driven by the need to see concrete results of their efforts and to obtain recognition from others for their successes. The need for concrete feedback is a characteristic which has often been associated with a high need for achievement. Therefore it can be argued that the disabled high-flyers in this study have been found to be similar to non-disabled high-flyers in previous studies (e.g. White et al, Cox & Cooper, 1988) in terms of what they consider work means to them and their motivations to work. They were more concerned with internal gains and also the social status and sense of identity work would provide them with. Unlike non-disabled high-flyers, the disabled high-flyers perceived work as being a means by which they could prove their worth to others and get away from the helpless dependent stereotype of disabled people.

All of the disabled people believed they had certain personality traits and skills which created fundamental feelings of strength, self-sufficiency and independence, considered essential for future career achievement and success. They also demonstrated characteristics such as competence, determination, stubbornness and initiative that they considered facilitated their career progression. These individual characteristics were perceived to be imperative for disabled people, especially those with childhood disabilities who had attended segregated school, and been denied opportunities to pursue their desired goals in the conventional way. This caused them to follow what was termed as 'individualised' patterns of progression to meet their personal aspirations. This was not the case for individuals who had a non-disabled childhood and acquired their impairment in early adulthood; they followed what was identified as 'education-related' career progression. As children, they were exposed to high parental expectations and sometimes were encouraged to pursue prescribed career paths. Moreover they all attended mainstream school which gave them the opportunity to study subjects of their choice rather than being restricted by a limited curriculum and poor teaching. Even when the acquisition of a disability forced respondents to re-orientate their original 'education-related' career path, the long-term effects of this were not necessarily negative as it enabled them to learn important skills and, in some instances, increase their status and prestige in society.

However the respondents' careers developed, education was perceived as an important prerequisite for their success. All had been educated up to O'level standard, whilst most were qualified with university degrees. Education was considered to be a major determinant of the respondents' career success, for two

reasons. For many, it provided entry into a specific vocation, facilitating conventional career progression. However others saw the literacy and social skills it provided as necessary conditions for economic development, and thus considered their educational status to have significant clout on their position within the labour market.

Earlier research, (e.g. Barnes, 1991) has argued that the special education system perpetuates and legitimatises discrimination practices in all other areas of social life. In contrast, this study found that respondents who attended segregated educational institutions, as children and young people, considered it to be critical to their personality development and character formation. They saw it as providing them with an environment free of mainstream barriers in which they could explore and develop a sense of self. However, unlike the individuals with acquired disabilities who went to mainstream school and pursued a career directly related to their education, the individuals who had a segregated education were exposed to a limited curriculum and were not necessarily always educated in areas that they wanted to pursue as a career. Therefore several individuals with congenital disabilities did not always have the option of following an 'education-related' pattern of career progression.

The evidence from this chapter shows that the factors the disabled high-flyers perceived to have influenced their career success were not dissimilar to those reported for non-disabled high-flyers in earlier studies (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; White et al, 1992). One important factor seemed to be overcoming challenges in early life; another seems to be the individuals' strong drive and intrinsic motivation, stemming from their childhood socialisation and life experiences that, they believed, were important

to their successful future development, including informal and formal experiences of education. Therefore, as this chapter shows, there is inevitably some degree of interdependence between the areas perceived to influence the career success of disabled high-flyers.

CHAPTER 7: Discussion and Conclusion

*Most of the aged know what it's like to be young and silly;
but none of the young know what it's like to be old and wise.*

(Harold Macmillan)

THE PORTRAIT OF A DISABLED HIGH-FLYER

Introduction

The focus of this study has been on the career development and success of a group of disabled professionals. The study discovered, firstly, how the disabled people perceived that their childhood, education, personality, career choices and disability influenced their career development, achievements and career success. Secondly, it identified how these individuals define what success means to them.

This chapter attempts to summarise and collate all the information formulated during this piece of research, concerning the perceptions, experiences and background of thirty-one disabled people who have reached respectable positions in their career, and exceeded the employment expectations of the disabled population. With this information, it can show what the disabled person perceived to be the key factors needed for them to become the successful disabled high-flyer. As was stated in Chapter 1 there are two major reasons for doing this. Firstly, it responds to the call to fill a clearly identified gap in academic literature on careers and on disability, by providing a knowledge of the disabled high-flyers' progressive journey to career success, including significant turning points, obstacles encountered and specific strategies adopted to combat them. Furthermore, it

serves to cement together various areas of previous research about disabled people, which have tended to focus only on single aspects of career development, such as childhood, education, personality, employment, disability and discriminations. Secondly, it can provide role models for prospective career-minded people with disabilities, who can use the findings and biographies as teaching material in case study and workshop exercises in education and training. This will serve to significantly contribute to the educational process of equality and awareness in employment and society in general.

In order to illustrate what makes the disabled high-flyer successful, and how they define career success, a description of the major findings will be reported under the same broad headings that have been used throughout – namely, career choice and progression, childhood, education, personality and motivation, and conceptions of success. Further these findings reveal the differences between males and females and individuals with acquired and congenital disabilities in terms of the extent to which they consider these five attributes contribute to their career development and career success. By relating the key findings of the research back to existing work on career success and career development, I seek to demonstrate the contribution that my work can make to it. Further I intend to contribute to the field of careers by using the qualitative patterns and themes, generated from the data, concerning how disabled people perceive success and what factors they consider influence it.

The chapter concludes by considering, firstly the practical implications and applications of this research; secondly, any limitations of the research findings; and finally

suggestions for future research which would build on the findings presented here.

7.1 Career Choice, Progression and Turning Points

7.1.1 Career Choice and Progression

As Hodkinson and Sparks (1997) state, all individuals experience career and life changes which are triggered by three different categories of turning points, namely structural, self-initiated and forced by external events or the action of others.

Educational training and qualifications seemed to be prerequisites to the career choice of many of the disabled high-flyers. Many individuals followed a pattern of 'education-related' career progression, which, according to this thesis, involves taking specialist training and qualifications, entering an occupation in that field, and undergoing several promotions to reach a respectable and aspired status, with minimal geographical mobility. A large number of these individuals were men who had acquired their disabilities in adulthood, thus having experience of a non-disabled childhood with high parental expectations and mainstream schooling. Several respondents who followed this 'education-related' pattern of progression saw the benefits of remaining with a single employer for several years and experiencing promotion and advancement over the years in the same organisation, as opposed to progressing up the occupational hierarchy via several organisation and employer moves. As indicated in King's (1999) study, career progression via several employer moves is regarded as a conventional career orientation for non-disabled high-flyers who are concerned with making sure they have the right range of skills and experience for future employability. However, this thesis illustrates

that staying with the same employer for many years has been proposed, by the disabled high-flyers, as being a good strategy for success for disabled people. It can be argued that this differential conception of conventional career progression is significantly influenced by political, social and economic issues (Herr, 1996). For example, according to the Labour Force Survey (1998), disabled people may need assistive accommodations in the workplace and home, and services in the community which makes geographical mobility difficult, thus encouraging them to stay in one place for as long as possible, if only for the sake of convenience. Furthermore, as Hendey (1999) maintains, disabled people in receipt of personal assistance are often denied the right to be flexible in their daily lives. The limiting of flexibility and spontaneity by predetermined support provision and the built environment, makes it impossible for disabled people to move to another city to develop professionally on par with their non-disabled counterparts.

In recent years more and more careers are seen as “boundaryless” entities, which move across boundaries of separate employers and as such are independent of conventional organisational principles (Arthur, 1994; Mirvis and Hall, 1994). The responsibility for development rests not with the employer but with the individual, who will have to acquire the right mix of skills to survive in a ‘freelance’ environment. If this continues many disabled people could be at a disadvantage due to their restricted opportunity to move jobs and attain a range of experience. This thesis argues that oldstyle careers, operating in stable and supportive organisations are more beneficial to disabled people, especially those who entered their career as a direct result of their education, than some forms of new careers which are known as ‘boundaryless’ and which requires more

flexibility and moving from place to place. However, on the other hand, this thesis shows that some of the disabled people were in fact restricted by the glass ceiling advancement of oldstyle careers and opted to re-direct their career path, pursuing a career with opportunities for promotion. The study also shows that individuals with congenital disabilities were often likely to follow more of a boundaryless approach to career progression in order to meet their initial career aspirations. Further it suggests that people with childhood disabilities may be victims of prejudice by many important agents of socialisation such as family and education which can impose significant restrictions on them, limiting their career choices and opportunities. Shepherd (1997) notes that there are very few examples of co-ordinated range of opportunities which would offer disabled people a number of different options, geared to different abilities and aspirations. Therefore, this thesis suggests that unless disabled people are driven enough to combat disabling barriers to meet their own desired goals, they may never attain personal career success.

In this study, the high-flyers with childhood disabilities did demonstrate a strong need to achieve their personal goals and therefore, when denied the opportunity to meet them by more conventional means, they followed what was identified as 'individualised career progression'. In the context of this study, this type of career progression has been described as a pattern constructed of a series of challenging jobs which have no obvious connection with prior educational training. When facilitated by hard work, timing and significant life events, these jobs can act as steps to career progression and individual achievement. This was the career pattern followed by a number of high-flyers with

congenital disabilities, several of whom worked as artists, recognised it as being the only way they could achieve career success in their desired occupation. For several of them, events of disability discrimination in various aspects of life, including education and society as a whole, that served to impede education-related career progression were considered to have influenced their decision to follow such individualised career paths. It was noted that this type of career progression was facilitated by a series of life events that marked significant turning points in their career route. These turning points led the high-flyers down a path that enabled them to meet the right people and be in the right place at the right time in order to take advantage of opportunities to achieve and advance in their chosen profession. However although this was important, hard work, perseverance and strong self-efficacy beliefs were thought to be imperative to turn the opportunities into achievements and to perpetually progress along such career routes. This is consistent with White et al's (1992) study which suggests that although luck and external events are important to engender opportunities and encourage people to be in the right place at the right time, it is also extremely important to have the ability and application to capitalise on it.

A third pattern of career progression that emerged from this research was conceptualised as 'redirected career progression'. A number of the high-flyers in this study were influenced by external life events to change their career completely. As they explained, for many, this career change was engendered as a consequence of them being victims of disabling barriers which hampered or prevented their progression in their original aspired career. A small number of respondents with acquired disabilities could not physically

continue to work in their original careers after becoming disabled merely because the work environment was not accessible and supporting to disabled workers. Similarly, a number of respondents with congenital disabilities had to change their careers if they wanted to 'get to the top' (i.e. have a prestigious position and a respectable income) because they were being denied the opportunity to climb the career ladder due to issues surrounding their disability. This evidences the existence of the 'glass ceiling' in many sectors of the economic market, and, consistent with Prescott-Clark (1990), shows this to be a possible reason for the under-representation of disabled people in managerial and professional status occupations. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the social model of disability has an impact on what disabled people perceive as barriers to their career development.

Career change was also the result of self-initiated turning points (Hodkinson and Sparks, 1997), i.e. in response to personal feelings of boredom and lack of interest, and the need to do something different using individual abilities and disabilities to achieve desirable goals. Some respondents had to redirect the original career choice due to a religious calling, or the actions of others preventing them from pursuing a career in the field in which they were previously trained and qualified. Therefore, it must be emphasised that, contrary to what may have been expected, being disabled was not always the cause of career change and re-direction. Several of the disabled people perceived their career to have developed much the same as that of their non-disabled colleagues.

It was clearly illustrated that several of the disabled people who had achieved their

prestigious position in a high status career had done so by re-orientating their initial career path. Furthermore it can be suggested that for this group, disability was not only a causal attribute of re-directed career progression, but also at times a precursor of career choice and success. A majority of the disabled high-flyers experienced an early challenge in their occupational and personal lives, but coped successfully with this challenge. The acquisition of evidence of their competence, through performance accomplishment and experience of psychological success should raise self-efficacy beliefs and hence the setting of more challenging goals in the future. Therefore it seems that, according to the narratives of the disabled professionals, success generates success. This was also indicated with White et al's (1992) successful women.

Further, the findings demonstrate that although the disabled high-flyers' journey through life was perceived to be significantly scattered with challenging and traumatic experiences, their descriptions illustrate that they all managed to learn from adversity, overcome challenges, solve any problems encountered and move on. Most felt that they had emerged from the experiences with added strengths and skills thought to be valuable to be a successful competitor in the mainstream global economy. Thus, the findings in this thesis suggest that employers should be aware that the skills a disabled person has to gain to survive and attain equality and acceptance in mainstream society are beneficial to employment. This is supported by Duckworth (1995), who argues that disabled people living in a predominantly inaccessible world have to develop highly refined problem solving skills that can be seen as paramount in today's employment. Furthermore, in a society where workforce diversity is critical to survive in the competitive global

economy, disabled people should be encouraged more and more to join the labour market to meet the needs of a increasingly diverse customer base including disabled people.

7.2 Childhood

The research has shown that disabled high-flyers are not dissimilar to non-disabled high-flyers as, from their individual accounts of childhood it can be concluded that most of the respondents were brought up within a middle class culture emphasising the value of hard work and accomplishment. They all explained that they were supported, by significant adults, during their formative years, and encouraged to achieve highly and do their best.

7.2.1 Parental Influence & Social Class

The majority of the sample identified their parents as significant to the cultivation of their potential, both in terms of social and professional progress. However, as the individuals with congenital disabilities became disabled during or immediately after birth, disability inevitably became a major factor in their childhood socialisation, especially influencing what was expected of them. It was noted that, in many cases, although the parents of children with congenital disabilities supported them to do whatever made them happy and to do well in their chosen pursuits, they had no prescribed expectations for their children to undertake any particular occupational direction. This lack of premeditated foresight of the disabled child's development is most likely the result of most respondents being born between the 1950s to early 70s, in an era when disability politics had not been established and the whole concept was not at all comprehended by the lay person. At that time disabled children were characterised by narratives of dependence, vulnerability and

exclusion (Priestley, 1998). Society perceived them as socially and physically deviant, and incapable of contributing to the development of the economy (Oliver, 1990). This notion was reinforced by the medical model of disability which dictated that disabled people retained dependency even as maturity increased, thus were perceived as 'eternal children'. Unfortunately, during the time the majority of this group were growing up, there were a severe lack of positive disabled role models, thus parents were unlikely to challenge the respected opinions expressed by the medical profession, who were considered as:

“God-like figures; strong, powerful, clever and in control of some kind of magic”

(Young, 1981)

The research suggests that the disability stereotypes of disabled people being passive and dependent (if they lived to adulthood) conjured up by the medical profession and society as a whole, influenced parental expectations concerning the future development of their disabled child. Social class also had an impact on what parents expected of their disabled child, for example, the findings suggest that the people who grew up in a more working class environment were exposed to far lower expectations.

The evidence suggests that certain observable cues and abstract social class symbols (e.g. education, parents' jobs) within the family unit, were recognised by the respondents during their childhood and inevitably influenced their occupational preferences and their life style. For example, middle class culture placed a high value on achievement, and encouraged the attainment of high-flying goals, particularly in academic pursuits. Parents from middle classes may have had slightly less rigid expectations of their congenitally

disabled child than what they may have expected from a non-disabled child. However, they were still keen for the disabled child/children to conform to the norms and values of the middle class culture as much as possible.

Several of the individuals with congenital impairments felt that although their parents had no prescribed expectations for them to succeed in a particular occupational field, they were encouraged, as children, to work hard and achieve as well as they could, and were given the financial and emotional support to do so. These individuals originated from middle class backgrounds and had parents who occupied high-status occupations. This lends support to the contention that high achievers are encountered, more frequently, in more affluent families where parental occupations are of a significantly high status and the practised culture values achievement and the attainment of high-flying goals (Eysenck & Cookson, 1970). Further, the finding endorses arguments presented in disability research expressing the view that the social class structure which determines access to things such as education, jobs and higher income still prevails in the disability community (e.g. Pfeiffer, 1991). Socioeconomic background was perceived to be important to the success of high-flyers from middle class origins. This was because not only were they exposed to values and practices of working hard and doing well, but also they had greater access to services and facilities which were required to facilitate and support occupational participation, enhancing opportunities for success.

Not all of the high-flyers, however, were from middle class backgrounds, yet they still managed to achieve career success. This confronts much discourse on career success and

on disability suggesting that individuals originating from lower classes tend to have weak need for achievement (uncharacteristic of high-flyers) and low chances of occupational success. But this study shows that a great number of the disabled people, regardless of their socioeconomic background, had parents who provided them with love and support in whatever they chose to do. This adds weight to Wood's (1973) thesis that the provision of a home environment where parents are warm, loving and respectful to their child as a valued individual permits the cultivation of individual potential.

The impact of disability on childhood socialisation was not an issue for the high-flyers with acquired disabilities, as they acquired a disability status when they were in their late teens or early adulthood, and therefore grew up and were socialised as non-disabled children. However, gender did influence how these individuals were brought up. The males in this group had parents who were ambitious for them to succeed become high-achievers. Interestingly, the majority of these men came from a culture emphasising the value of hard work and achievement striving. However the women who had a non-disabled childhood recalled their upbringing as being primarily working class and their parents as supportive and loving, and permitting them to do anything that would generate happiness, rather than pushing them to become great achievers as the men were expected to be.

The women with acquired disabilities tended to pursue traditional female careers, undoubtedly influenced by their gender-related experiences in childhood. Although these women pursued relatively low status careers before becoming disabled, the findings

showed that the acquisition of their disability activated latent personality traits of determination and ambition which energised the women's need for achievement and drove them to pursue high-flying goals.

All of the disabled people in the study were able to highlight experiences of childhood deprivation or early trauma. For some, deprivation consisted of separation from significant others at a crucial stage in their development, and a number spent their early years at a boarding school where they had to learn about responsibility and self-reliance as children. Others were traumatised as a consequence of being disabled, having to endure frequent periods of medical intervention, or exclusion and prejudice from mainstream situations. However it was deduced that the environment in which the disabled children spent the majority of their formative years, be it home or school, provided them with the support and encouragement that was needed to convert the early negative experiences into positive opportunities. This facilitated the disabled adult to develop with added strengths, including independence, self-sufficiency and survivability, which served them well in their future career orientations. The theory of struggle and trauma being characteristic of high-flyers is not confined to disabled people as is shown by Cooper & Hingley's (1985) study of *The Change Makers* and Cox & Cooper's (1988) 'Highflyers'. For the disabled high-flyers in this study, traumatic experiences did not necessarily cease as childhood ended, but the evidence shows that the impact was less harmful to the psyche as each struggle brought more strength and more efficient coping mechanisms.

Only a minority of the high-achievers were first-born or only children, thus contradicting earlier theory noting the predominance of first born and only children among high achievers (White et al, 1992; Helmreich et al, 1980). However, in their early years, the disabled high-flyers, like the first born/only children, recalled receiving significant amounts of parental affection and attention, had their needs gratified quickly and received help promptly when in distress. This was perhaps due to their extensive physical care demands rather than birth order as has been suggested in theory of non-disabled high-flyers.

This research showed that the career orientation of the females in the study, particularly those with childhood disability, was unlikely to be influenced by their gender. It seems that disability was the master status, overriding all other attributes. These women were not expected, and thus not socialised, to pursue traditional female roles of housewife or mother. This may be, as Russo (1988) suggests, in part, due to the societal myth that disabled women are asexual, and incapable of leading socially and sexually fulfilling lives. However, this was not altogether a negative thing as it permitted the women to compete against men in the professional sector and succeed in gender atypical careers. Baumann (1997) believes that the relative lack of options available to disabled women could make them more dedicated towards a career. She suggests that because disabled women grow up with the expectation that they will not have families, they tend to focus on their career, intending to leave a legacy through their work. However, this research showed that even when the women did have roles of wife or/and mother (as did a third of the women with congenital disabilities) they still felt the need to pursue a successful

career. This contradicts the stereotypical conception of disabled women being passive, dependent and helpless (Lang,1982), and in a situation resulting in rolelessness. Moreover it shows that disabled women are not only capable of achieving a status equal to non-disabled women in the home, but also have the potential to compete with non-disabled men in the workplace.

Following the fact the disabled women are not expected or socialised to pursue traditional female roles, it is not really surprising that several of the successful women with congenital disabilities believed their fathers had been most influential in their occupational development, encouraging their achievement and directing their career orientation. It can be argued that the lack of emphasis on appropriate sex-role behaviour in childhood could have caused these women to develop what are often regarded as innate masculine traits. Such evidence endorses White et al's (1992) thesis which found that many successful women to identify strongly with their fathers and engage in risk-taking gender atypical activities with them.

7.2.2 Childhood Traumas

Many of the disabled high-flyers were able to highlight periods of trauma, deprivation and loss during their childhood. Deprivation was seen not necessarily in terms of grinding poverty, but rather in a psychological sense - a loss of, or separation from, parents at a crucial stage of emotional development. In their formative years, several men with acquired or congenital disabilities suffered the death or loss of a parent (the father in most cases) at a young age. This generated an early sense of responsibility and

the child moved into an adult role before the end of childhood. This was particularly apparent for respondents with only-son, status who felt that in their father's absence, they had a responsibility to take care of their mother and sisters.

Several respondents were separated from their parents at a young age by being sent away to boarding school and experiencing the traumas of an 'orphanic existence'. The negative effects of uprooting a child have been documented by many researchers including Shakespeare & Watson (1998), who argue that segregated education may result in isolation as it may mean losing regular contact with non-disabled peers and family because it involves attending a school well outside the local community. However, the male high-flyers in Cox & Cooper's (1988) study believed traumas of orphanic existence, through death of parent(s) or being sent to boarding school at an early age, to be significant to their future orientations. These experiences could be seen as propagating a general sense of independence and self-sufficiency.

Other early traumas included substantial periods of hospitalisation, medical intervention and negative prognosis. These were most recalled by many of the group with childhood disabilities. However their supportive upbringing, which encouraged personal internality and a strong need to achieve, helped the group survive such early adverse experiences. This in turn, led to a basic feeling of strength, independence and self-sufficiency, responsibility and an early sense of mastery. Development of these traits was seen as critical to the sample group's present occupational situation and drive for achievement. This is supported by existing research (e.g. Cooper & Hingley, 1985; Cox & Cooper,

1988), which reports the significantly positive causal effects of early adverse experiences on the future actions of high-flyers. However, as mentioned before (chapter 6, section 6.3.4) in this thesis, care must be taken not to assume that all disabled people who experience some kind of childhood trauma grow up to be successful in their careers. The findings indicate that it is, in fact, a combination of factors, which facilitate such success. For example if a person has experienced childhood trauma but has an internal locus of control they will have the self-confidence to learn from the trauma and, enable it to make them stronger and able to handle future events successfully. This contrasts with other people, who lack self-confidence and believe their destiny is controlled by others who are likely to be crushed by trauma. Such was the case with William Hay, born in 1754, who believed that the socio-psychological difficulties he experienced because of his impairment had caused him to be bashful, uneasy and unsure of himself. However such experiences can also induce perseverance, stubbornness and problem-solving skills that will be valuable in future orientations.

7.3 Personality, Motivation & Work Centrality

7.3.1 Patterns of Motivation

The majority of the sample had intrinsic motivational tendencies. Like previous studies of non-disabled high-flyers, there were no noticeable differences in motivation between the men and women in this study. All were ambitious people, with a determination to achieve interesting and worthwhile goals which would also give them a purposeful role in society. Their good record of past achievements had motivated them to set and achieve increasingly higher goals. Several admitted that their need for achievement was

energised by the attitudinal and social prejudice they encountered as disabled people and the low status which they were automatically ascribed by society. Further, their need for achievement was significantly influenced by the disequilibrium between the disabled minority and the non-disabled majority. Adams (1965) suggests that an individual's motivation is influenced by how they feel they are being treated in comparison to others of similar status. As the findings indicated, the majority of individuals with congenital disabilities in the study maintained that they were driven by the need to prove their self-worth and to compete on an equal level with their non-disabled colleagues.

All of the people in this study had a tendency to prefer challenging tasks, which could be interpreted as high mastery motivation. Most mentioned that they were unlikely to be inhibited by negative attitudes and experiences, but tended to persevere in the face of adversity and would treat each new challenge as an opportunity that could be learnt from, rather than being discouraged by it. However, like the successful people in other studies, this group of individuals knew when to stop fighting. The findings here are endorsed by the work of Cox & Cooper (1988) who discovered that whatever setbacks the high-flyers encountered, they always survived and coped very successfully, learning a great deal in the process. This characteristic is often associated with individual childhood experiences of separation and early responsibility. Furthermore, and especially for those individuals in this study with congenital disabilities, it could have been built up from their experiences of growing up and living as a disabled person in a predominantly non-disabled society. As Freund (1973) points out, people with disabilities are good at solving problems as they encounter one nearly every day of their lives.

A number of the disabled people maintained that they were motivated to work by the actual purpose of the job and the moral satisfaction they received from serving others. They felt that their work was a means of demonstrating their worth and value to society. Further, it provided opportunities for them to experience a continually changing environment, to play an active part in inducing change in that environment and, in doing so, to use and develop further their skills and capacities. A few of the individuals, who felt that they had been victims of disability discrimination and prejudice, were motivated to work to ensure the same did not happen to other disabled people. So, the disabled high-flyer is not only contributing to the welfare of the economy, and the happiness and well-being of society, but also to the advancement of their own social status as a disabled person. Fulfilling a purposeful role in society and serving others, as opposed to being served by others, goes some way to disproving the traditional stereotype of disabled people being passive and dependent with an ascribed underclass status. It was the belief of many of the people in the study that occupying a purposeful, respectable and prestigious position in society's economic structure would serve to divert attention away from their disability, increasing acceptance and reducing discrimination. As Sutherland (1981) argues, acceptance becomes easier the more one conforms to the norm of the societal majority.

The sense of purpose that work gives disabled people also has psychological consequences, in that it serves to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. Furthermore, it permits a healthier lifestyle not only by satisfying economic needs but

also by providing fellowship, social life, respect and admiration for others. By showing disabled people in purposeful economic roles, building relationships with and earning respect from fellow colleagues, this research serves to provide role models for disabled and non-disabled people and emphasises the economic value of employing this minority group to help serve the demands of a multi-cultural society.

Feedback and recognition was cited as a significant driving force for several respondents. This pattern of motivation was greater for respondents with congenital disabilities, especially women and artists. The women claimed to be externally driven by the need to see concrete results of their efforts and obtain recognition from others for their successes. The small percentage of both men and women who felt feedback and recognition were important driving forces were mostly concentrated in the arts sector. They needed to see concrete results for fulfilling a purposeful role, being a success and doing a good job. The artists were particularly driven by recognition and feedback, as their career progression and success was largely dependent on being seen, on who saw them, and how were they rated by others. This need for concrete feedback is a characteristic which has often been associated with a high need for achievement (McClelland et al, 1953). However, although the artists could be described as true internals as they displayed a strong belief in their ability to control the direction of their careers, the very nature of their work meant they were not exclusively in control of their professional successes or failures. They felt the luck factor had an important part to play in their current success, but they were more likely to refer to it as a willingness to take advantage of the opportunities that luck presented.

Although money was not considered to be a primary driving force to work, most of the high-flyers in this group mentioned that money was indeed necessary for a decent level of subsistence, and a respectable independent lifestyle for themselves and their families. This is supported Vroom (1964) who maintains that despite the old saying: "*money can't buy happiness*", it can be exchanged for many commodities which are necessary for survival and comfort. For the disabled high-flyers money goes far beyond the satisfaction of biological needs. The goods and services purchased with the money grant them a comfortable lifestyle. However, the research suggests the disabled individuals are intrinsically motivated in that they seek to maximise their satisfaction through responsibility, challenge and learning derived from the task itself. As has been evidenced in other studies (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; White et al, 1992), this is also characteristic of non-disabled high-flyers.

This thesis provides an insight into the life and career development of the disabled high-flyers, as they perceive it, and a knowledge of how they overcame encounters of disability discrimination in the home, in education, in the workplace and in society to achieve their personal goals and current success. With this then it can be argued that the disabled people were destined to become high-flyers because their characteristics were prerequisites to their life successes and not dissimilar to those required to achieve career success.

7.3.2 Locus of Control

Like the non-disabled high-flyers in Cox & Cooper's (1988) and White et al's (1992)

studies, the disabled high-flyers in this study perceived that they had an internal locus of control in that they were self-controlled as opposed to controlled by others. They believed it was their own behaviour which determined their future life prospects, and not purely external factors such as luck, chance or significant others. The majority demonstrated high levels of determination and stubbornness, considered essential for them to persist in the face of adversity and overcome obstacles. These traits were thought to become stronger for several of those who acquired their disabilities later in life.

The findings indicate that although the disabled people in the study were not easily defeated, they knew when to persevere and when it was not worth it. This is consistent with the previous aforementioned studies such as White et al's (1992) 'Women's Career Development' and Cox & Cooper's (1988) 'High-flyers' which maintain that the successful people had clear objectives and had the ability to control the direction of their careers.

Again, similar to the discoveries made by White et al (1992) regarding the influence of luck and timing on career success, many of the women in this study felt luck was important in their careers. However the men and women alike attributed their success to hard work, tenacity and the willingness to take advantage of the opportunities luck presented. Similarly, the MDs in Cox and Cooper's (1988) study experienced lucky breaks but felt it was necessary to have the ability to capitalise on them. So, although Colwill's (1984) thesis conceives luck as something that is beyond the control of the individual and will serve to inhibit their career growth, this research argues that

individuals can create their own luck by making certain choices, working hard, and being at the right place at the right time. Thus, by people being proactive and selective with the opportunities luck presents, it serves not to inhibit but to facilitate career growth.

7.3.3 Work Centrality

Several of the high-flyers saw their work as instrumental to their self-image. This was more significant for those with congenital disabilities, who viewed work as something for which they could be valued and also as a means of proving their worth to society. Further, by developing a positional identity – defining themselves in terms of their career achievements – they considered diagnostic overshadowing to be reduced. Disabled high-flyers are identified by their professional status, which becomes the master status, and not their disability, a low status attributed to them as a result of medical diagnosis of their impairment. Several high-flyers believed that by occupying a responsible, prestigious role in the developing economy they would have a greater chance of being respected and accepted into mainstream society. They considered this to be a successful strategy.

Both the men and women in the study considered work as imperative. Even since taking on the roles of wife and/or mother, the women described their work as crucial to their psychological well-being, although they saw it as more of a peripheral rather than central part of self-identification. Further, since marrying or being in a stable partnership, women felt less of a need to prove their worth to society than they did previously through their work.

Few high-flyers with acquired disabilities felt their career was an integral part of their identity. This could be correlated to the fact that most had families and concerns outside work. However they conceived their work as invaluable to the enhancement of their position and respect within the community. The women saw their occupational position as satisfying an obligation in terms of personal responsibility or internalised norms of duty, and as a means of contributing to societal economic growth.

The majority of high-flyers expended significant amounts of time, energy and commitment on work-related pursuits. They explained that they were likely to complete tasks successfully even when confronted with aversive experiences, therefore demonstrating high self-efficacy expectations. Many occupied their professional roles after many years of training which involved hard work, dedication and perpetual successes. These early challenges enabled the high-flyers to test out their abilities, and their experience of success served to further raise their self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, these individuals expressed futuristic visions, believing they had the ability to satisfy their long-term aspirations and ambitions. They demonstrated their dedication and commitment to work either by working beyond their statutory working hours (including evenings and weekends) and/or attaching personal value to their work and having long-term goals. Further, the group with congenital disabilities were driven by the need to 'make a difference' by working to bring social justice to society and make it more inclusive. Many considered their work as a means by which they could 'change the world' by helping minority groups, including other disabled people, to achieve their aspirations by influencing public policies and government legislation. This was

displayed by their thirst for new skills, advancement and achieving new goals. This is not dissimilar to the syndrome of 'Creative Discontent' mentioned in Cox & Cooper's (1988) study of male high-flyers. The respondents in their sample were driven, by a general restlessness and discontent with the world as it is, to do something positive to improve it.

Thus, the majority of the disabled high-flyers considered their work to be extremely important to their lives. Furthermore, the fact that they used work as a means of self-identification, had a future intentional focus and believed they could execute the required behaviour to achieve challenging goals demonstrates their high need for achievement, strong internal locus of control and high career centrality.

7.4 Education

7.4.1 Level and Subject of Education

As a group, a large number of the disabled high-flyers have achieved a relatively high level of education. Of the thirty-one high-flyers in the sample, twenty-seven of them had undergraduate degrees, and ten of those also held postgraduate qualifications. However, four of the males with congenital disabilities did not attend university after achieving their A'Levels, and either undertook professional training directly related to their intended career or went straight into employment, learning on the job. Three of these men became established as professional artists.

Education, for most of the high-flyers, was perceived as a causal attribute of their current occupational and life situation. Over half of the sample considered their education to be

an essential prerequisite to their occupational success, choosing their academic subjects with a specific career in mind; the majority of these were males who had acquired their disabilities during adulthood. A possible explanation for this could be that these individuals were educated before the acquisition of their disability and thus, unlike those with congenital disabilities, went to mainstream school and were not restricted or limited in terms of what subjects they could pursue. As these individuals were educated between the 60s and early 80s, the findings prove consistent with reports by the DfEE (1982) and a study by Walker (1982), which indicate that whether children with physical impairments attended segregated or integrated education they were less likely to attain the same academic qualifications as their non-disabled peers. Many of the high-achievers with childhood disabilities were subjected to attitudinal prejudice or physical access restrictions in mainstream schools. However segregated school was often criticised for its limited curriculum and deficient teaching expertise. These points would serve to explain why only a small number pursued a field of study that was directly related to their career.

Two thirds of the women with congenital disabilities obtained educational qualifications which were seen as imperative to gain entrance into their current occupations. Interestingly the majority of these women and the small group of men whose choice of education permitted their career choice were educated in mainstream institutions either throughout, or for a substantial part of, their educational career. Such a correlation could be explained by these respondents having a wider range of subjects to choose from in mainstream schools; subjects that matched their original aspirations and would guarantee

entrance into a respectable and prestigious career. Further, it could be argued that the mainstream education system taught the respondents that in order to conform to the norms and values of society they needed to learn the formal and informal skills necessary to pursue a valuable position in the labour force. As Warnock (1978) reports, education prepares individuals to become economically participative members of society. So, experience of the rules, regulations and expectations of the mainstream education system would invariably influence one's future educational and career decisions.

Education was also identified as a primary ingredient in the disabled people's social, psychological and cultural development. Further, it was noted as the source by which the group, as children and young people, could learn the basic norms and values of the society in which they live in order to function safely and harmoniously. This finding is consistent with much sociological theory, including Giddens (1997) which postulates that by socialising generations of young people to accept dominant norms and values, education plays an important role in the maintenance of social conformity, both in formal and also less obvious ways.

7.4.2 Segregated Schools

Consistent with a body of work (e.g. Barnes, 1991; Dr John Mary and the British Council Of Disabled People, 1986), this research discovered that because segregated schools offered a limited curriculum and poor teaching expertise, respondents who were products of the segregated education system had very limited control over the subjects they studied. It was never an option to decide on a career first and choose the corresponding

subjects second. Thus, in this respect, segregated education has a major part to play in the discriminatory process by denying disabled individuals the freedom to choose how they intended to contribute to society's developing economy. However, although segregated education does indeed restrict the educational and therefore, occupational choices of young disabled people, this thesis argues that it is nonetheless essential to the social, physical and psychological development of disabled children. Furthermore, in support of Jenkinson's (1997) work, the disabled people considered segregated education to encourage their feeling of security and enhance their self-esteem by avoiding continual comparison of their achievements with other, more physically competent, students. Just under half of the group with congenital disabilities attended segregated educational institutions, exclusively throughout their compulsory education and further education. Several of them considered their segregated education to be paramount to their current career success. They believed it to be critical to their character formation and the cultivation of their developing personality, as it provided an environment free from the intervention of mainstream barriers, permitting them, as children, to explore and develop a sense of self. This is consistent with Jenkinson's (1997) argument that segregated schools are perceived as more supportive, both physically and socially, and less threatening to students with disabilities than the regular schools.

So, while this thesis accepts that segregated education does impede the economic future of disabled people by restricting the range of educational and occupational choices available to them, it rejects the claims of some researchers (e.g. Alderson & Goodey, 1998; Barnes, 1991) that segregated education inhibits exploration of the self by its

unreal protected environment which shields disabled individuals from the realities of society. This research indicates that disabled children need a protective accessible environment, free of mainstream barriers, to develop their personality and character fully with the support of assistive devices and high quality support. Furthermore, because the classes are usually small with high teacher-student ratios, disabled children can receive one-to-one attention and instruction which can be pitched at a level appropriate to their individual needs. Such heterogeneity would not be accommodated in mainstream schools as, Tomlinson (1995) argues, they still operate of the principle of standardisation – they force students into standard curriculum programmes and have standard expectations for ‘normal’ behaviour, or they force the students out of the system altogether.

Growing up in a barrier-free environment gives disabled children the opportunity to be ‘children’ first and to have dreams and aspirations without the constraints of a disabling environment. If these dreams and aspirations are strong enough they could help to overcome the barriers encountered in mainstream society when these children try to achieve their goals as disabled adults.

The ancillary services offered by segregated schools and colleges, such as physiotherapy and speech therapy, were perceived as important to the maintenance of the individuals’ physical strength and ability to function competently and independently in mainstream society. This is consistent with Pearse (1996) who considered segregated institutions to be an integral ingredient to the social and psychological independence of disabled children. As Priestley et al (1999) affirmed, a segregated setting offers much more

autonomy than a mainstream setting as children have the freedom to associate with others in child-defined spaces, albeit within the usual parameters of the school environment.

Another advantage of segregated schools and colleges, mentioned by a number of the high-flyers, was their accessible physical environment that permitted social interaction and the freedom to establish social relationships without the hindrance of being constrained by the mainstream culture. A number who participated in mainstream school or college did encounter access difficulties which served to impede their social life and restrict their study options. Again such findings are supported by recent research (e.g. Jenkinson, 1997; Priestley, 1998), which report that positive social interaction and the establishment of social relations to be considered as more easily achievable, for disabled children, in segregated establishments. As Haring (1991) argues, peer acceptance is a primary outcome of schooling with important consequences for the quality of life of students with disabilities. Existing discourse reveals that low childhood peer acceptance can induce loneliness, truancy, psychopathology and suicide (Parker & Asher, 1987) as it deprives children of opportunities to learn normal, adaptive modes of social conduct and social cognition as well as undermining their academic progress.

However, a number of the respondents who participated in mainstream education saw their social experiences of it as valuable to their current occupational and social situation.

This thesis suggests that inclusive education can (for some people) facilitate the establishment of social relationships between disabled and non-disabled peers, as awareness and understanding of disability is said to engender an increasing acceptance of

it.

Although many of the men and women favoured educational segregation, the findings uncovered a number of deficiencies with total segregation. Many expressed frustration at the limited choice of subjects and poor standard of teaching available in segregated schools. As was mentioned previously, the study options available did not always correspond to the high-flyers' original career aspirations, and thus inevitably had a significant influence on their occupational status. Evidence reported by the DES (1986; 1989a; 1989b) indicated that the small number of staff in special schools coupled with their significantly limited, if not deficient, curricular expertise undeniably served to restrict the range and content of the curriculum. Further, as Jenkinson (1997) postulates, the lack of training and experience of most special school teachers in the secondary curriculum is anticipated as an increasing handicap as students with disabilities move into adolescence. As this research indicates, segregated education denies disabled people the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to compete in economic society on par with their non-disabled counterparts. The high-flyers who were educated within the mainstream system believed it gave them a greater chance to do just that.

This research shows that another negative causal effect of segregated schools/colleges was that it inhibits integration between the disabled and non-disabled community. This is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Barnes, 1991). Segregated day schools usually have a catchment area of 100 square miles or more, so children have to be transported out of their local community and may experience long travelling times, sometimes of up to two

hours a day. Some of the respondents mentioned that this definitely had a negative affect on building and maintaining relationships with peers from their local community. A number of the respondents, who attended residential segregated institutions, experienced periods of isolation at school as they were uprooted and distanced from their childhood environment at a relatively early age, which made it difficult to establish close relationships with local peers. As Jenkinson (1997) contends, lack of feedback from non-disabled peers and removal from the common culture of childhood and adolescence contributes to later isolation in the community. However, this research shows that the respondents perceived that their experiences of early separation engendered basic feelings of strength, self-sufficiency and independence - 'survival skills' which served them well in successfully meeting career goals and establishing their current position in society.

7.4.3 Education and Economic Participation for Disabled People

This thesis recognises that education has a significant part to play in the career and life success of the disabled high-flyers. However it also highlights the importance, and the constraints, of both segregated and mainstream education, and how disabled people perceive them to both facilitate and impede their successful career and life progression. As has been evidenced, disabled people are not a homogeneous group and have different needs, wants, abilities, and aspirations, which may not be wholly satisfied by total integration or total segregation. Therefore an alternative system is needed which facilitates disabled students to develop psychologically, socially and cognitively at the rate of their non-disabled peers. Jenkinson (1997) suggests that link schools and partial integration could contribute to the achievement of such goals. This system involves the

working relationship between a special school and a mainstream school. Partial integration is increasingly perceived as combining the 'best of both worlds' (Jenkinson, 1997). It permits those disabled students, who are able, a choice to pursue subjects not available in the special school's limited curriculum, and achieve the prerequisites regarded as essential for successful vocational participation and career development. Further, it would enable disabled and non-disabled students to share similar situations and build friendships and other relationships. However it also means that disabled students can still retain access to the support, facilities and resources from the special school that may not be available in the mainstream school.

7.5 Success

While success has traditionally been seen purely in the external, organisational terms of hierarchical seniority and salary level (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1994; Melamed, 1995), widespread evidence suggests that is not always how individual professionals themselves see it (e.g. Sturges, 1999). It is now imperative to give serious consideration to individuals' subjective conceptions of career success in order to gain an improved understanding of what they actually want from their careers, and the impact this has on their career development (Sturges, 1996; Driver, 1979; Schein, 1980). Further, as Sturges (1996) suggests, such knowledge about subjective career success will provide organisations with some indication of potential alternative focuses for future career development and human resource management initiatives.

It has been argued that the multi-national success of organisations has stemmed from the

diversity of their employees including disabled people (Cox & Blake, 1991; and Kandola, 1995), and if it is to continue they need to have an understanding of how disabled professionals define success for themselves. This research has shown that the disabled professionals' conceptions of career success are far removed from traditional notions of organisational success, such as hierarchical position and level of pay. The disabled high-achievers' subjective rather than objective career success is more likely to equal that of non-disabled high-achievers. This may be due to attitudinal, physical and social discrimination blocking opportunities for disabled employees to progress in their career and, thus achieve objective success alongside their non-disabled colleagues. However, this does not suggest that disabled people, given their differential psychosocial development, do not perceive the idea of objective career success, measured in terms of hierarchical position and level of financial reward, as most important to their own definitions of career success. The thesis demonstrates that disabled high-flyers have expanded definitions of career success which incorporate both internal subjective criteria, and external objective criteria.

Thus, this research fills the identified gap in existing career development and success theory that is based primarily on non-disabled models. Furthermore, by examining how disabled high-flyers define success for themselves the research pays heed to Bailyn's call for research into the internal career, to produce:

"... an aggregation of individual data that reflects differences in subjective meanings."

(Bailyn, 1989)

Furthermore this thesis recognises the dearth of theory on subjective conceptions of success, and its importance for contributing to the elimination of employment inequity, and the facilitation of career progression for disabled persons. According to Gattiker and Larwood (1990), the examination of individual perceptions of achievement is important because they might reveal that individuals feel differently about their accomplishments to how an outsider might expect.

7.5.1 New ideas of measuring career success for disabled people

This research suggests that success for disabled high-flyers is a concept which involves two large dimensions *internal* and *external*, each of which are composed of smaller themes. In total, seven criteria, (five internal and two external) were identified as important to the thirty-one disabled people's perceptions of career success. The five internal criteria are Personal Satisfaction/Happiness, Achievement, Service, Personal Development, and Equality; while the two external criteria identified are Material Wealth and Career Progression.

The findings of the research are supported by the view expressed in career literature (e.g. Sturges, 1999) that describing career success exclusively in the external terms of material wealth and hierarchical position does not represent what individuals feel about their own success. Although the thirty-one high-flyers in the study measured success in terms of internal criteria, only a minority were primarily concerned with career progression and material wealth. A plausible argument for this is that the causal effects of pay inequity and glass ceiling advancement limit the progression of disabled people in the workplace.

Furthermore, career progression may be restricted if disabled people require accommodations in their homes, and services in their communities, which mean it is difficult for them to make regular job and employer transitions during their working lives.

A further discovery of this research was that it was mostly the males who thought of career success in external terms. This endorses a significant body of work about career success suggesting that men are more concerned with the conventional idea of career success than females. However the vast majority of the sample in this study expressed their success in terms of internal criteria of achieving personal goals, and being happy and satisfied with what they do. This is contrary to non-disabled male high-flyers' conceptions of success which, Sturges (1996) suggests, are defined in terms of salary and hierarchical position. However there is no significant difference between how the disabled female high-flyers (especially with a congenital disability) in this study and non-disabled successful women in other studies (e.g. White et al, 1992) see career success. Both tend to see it more in terms of personal growth and serving others.

Onset of disability did not make a major difference to the respondents' perceptions of success. Respondents with congenital disabilities expressed a slightly stronger concern with personal development and equality than did the respondents who acquired their impairment later in life. A likely explanation for this is that the respondents with acquired disabilities had already defined success as a non-disabled person prior to their life as a disabled person. For example, according to previous studies based on non-disabled high-flyers, women are more likely to define success in terms of being happy. This was also

true for all three women in this study who acquired their disability in early adulthood.

Doing a good job and being of service to others were equally important to the men and women in this research sample. This is contrary to a significant body of literature (e.g. White et al, 1992; Sturges, 1996), relating to non-disabled high-flyers, which evidenced serving others and doing a good job to be predominately female aspirations. This research indicates that these aspirations were more prevalent for the high-flyers with congenital disabilities who felt that by serving others they could prove their self-worth to society. They believed success to be about being on an occupational and social equilibrium with their non-disabled contemporaries. However, this was not an issue for respondents with acquired disabilities who, it may be argued, had already experienced non-disabled status and, for most, it remained. As Sutherland (1981) maintains, individuals who acquired disabilities in adult life have much more power than those with congenital disabilities, in terms of factors such as money, legal status, position in the social structure, and experiences in dealing with encounters with other people.

An important contribution of this research is that it illustrates what kind of criteria are actually used by disabled high-flyers to define their own success. It shows that success means much more than pay and hierarchical advancement and so if employers became aware of this, the feelings of insecurity and instability, which many disabled employees may endure, could be lessened. This could enable disabled people to feel more confident about pursuing success on their own terms, which, as this research suggests, may often not relate to pay and advancement at all.

So, overall, this thesis demonstrates that the factors disabled people perceived to be important to their career development and success are not dissimilar from what was found, in previous studies, to be significant to the career success of non-disabled people. Furthermore, it shows that when coupled with a supportive childhood background, persistence, drive and an internal belief in one's actions, several of the high-flyers perceived their disability to be beneficial to their career success rather than disability being a hindrance as traditionally conceived.

7.6 Practical implications and applications of research

As evidenced above and in chapter 6, this research can be used to fill an identified gap in the field of disability, career development and career success. Such a study, based on subjective accounts of thirty-one disabled high-flyers, includes the life space of the individual by recognising both the individual/personal space and the work and non-work contexts within which the individual functions. It integrates findings and concepts from within multi-disciplinary approaches which focus primarily on the disabled individual (child psychology, developmental psychology, education and disability theory), and those that focus primarily on the group (social psychology, sociology and anthropology). From such a multidisciplinary integration this thesis can make a significant contribution to knowledge as it recognises that various situational and individual factors operate to influence the career behaviour and success of disabled people.

As has been noted in chapter 1, the body of literature on career success and career development has hitherto been based on the non-disabled individual. Thus, the completion of this research serves to contribute to the realm of academia by illustrating how a group of disabled people perceived that they achieved success. The value of the research findings to disabled people chiefly relates to the fact that they have shown that subjective career success is as important as objective career success. Although, in the past, careers success was based on hierarchical position and level of pay, this research has demonstrated that disabled people have different ideas about what it means to them, as is illustrated in chapter 6, section 6.5. Therefore it indicates that no such narrow definition of career success exists from the point of view of the individual. Further it appreciates that it is not a homogeneous concept founded on the criteria of pay and position alone therefore may prove beneficial for disabled professionals' self-awareness and self-esteem if facets of organisational life were based on non-disabled values.

This thesis succeeds to not only bring together various areas of previous research about disabled people, but also to research a unique group and combination of people. Although disabled people have been included many times in research concerning employment, they have tended to be either unemployed or working in low-paid low-status jobs. By reporting on the personal experiences, views and reflections of thirty-one disabled people on how they achieved career success and became 'high-flyers', this thesis can be used to inspire other disabled people, especially the younger generation, and encourage them to invest more time and effort planning to achieve their aspired goals. Furthermore, it serves as an important contribution to the learning process, as disabled people can learn

from the experiences of the disabled people in this study about ways to overcome discrimination, oppression and barriers to progression. The thesis show that anti-discrimination legislation such as the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act and the recent Disability Rights Commission has gone some way to reduce the inequality of disabled people in society, but it is also the hard work, determination and perseverance of those individuals who have achieved equality that make the most significant contribution to societal equality as a whole.

This research is micro-social, based on small scale, personal disaggregated and dynamic findings, and therefore it provides an in-depth insight of the journey travelled, as perceived by each of the disabled people, to success, including the obstacles encountered and the strategies adopted to overcome these obstacles. Thus, it can contribute to the educational process of equality and awareness by providing by positive literature about disabled people, which could be used as teaching material in case study and workshop exercises in education and training. It also could help to inform policy and practice in educational services by giving an understanding of significant educational experiences, needs and opinions of disabled people.

This research suggests that disabled children who attend segregated schools may often receive a lower standard of education and limited choice of employment options than those who attended mainstream schools. For this reason, disabled children need to be increasingly exposed to the culture and expectations of mainstream education, whilst maintaining the appropriate support and services available in segregated schools. This

presents disabled children with the opportunity for them to have an education equal to their non-disabled peers, and enables disabled adults to have career opportunities equal to their non-disabled colleagues.

This thesis can be used to help mainstream institutions and gatekeepers to become aware of what disabled people can achieve, and how their worth is valuable to the development of a multi-cultural global economy. This should open up doors to disabled people along the road of career success that were previously closed to them, and in turn lead to the removal of the glass ceiling, thus increasing the number of disabled people who can reach the top.

However, it should be pointed out that although the societal structure does have a significant influence on whether or not disabled people become a great occupational success, the successful disabled people in this research all perceived themselves as displaying traits and patterns of behaviour characteristic of high-achievers in other studies (e.g. Cox & Cooper, 1988; Cooper & Hingley, 1985; White et al, 1992). As with non-disabled successful people, the disabled people in this study felt they were single-minded, had a strong need to achieve their ambitions, were determined and stubborn, persisted in the face of adversity, and were opportunistic and hard working.

Although all the disabled people in the study acknowledged that there are many ghosts to overcome - within themselves, within others and within society - they also considered themselves to have a sense of optimism, and a hope that the ghosts inherent in all of us

would welcome the light, and not be terrified of it. As described by Henrik Isben (cited in White et al, 1992, p.229), in his play 'Ghosts':

“But I’m coming to believe that all of us are ghosts.... It’s not just what we inherit from our mothers and fathers. It’s also the shadows of dead ideas and opinions and convictions. They’re no longer alive, but they grip us all the same, and hold us against our will. All I have to do is open a newspaper to see ghosts hovering between the lines. They are haunting the whole country, those stubborn phantoms – so many of them, so thick, they’re like an impenetrable dark mist. And here we are, all of us, so abjectly terrified by the light.”

7.7 Suggestions for future research

The most obvious avenue for future research is to repeat the study described here with other groups of disabled employees, for example disabled people working in manual or skilled labour. Future research could seek to identify how disabled manual/skilled workers perceive how the five factors used in this study would influence their career development and career choice. A further interest would be to find out how their perceptions of what influences their career development and choices are similar to those of their non-disabled counterparts. Also it would be interesting to discover how disabled people who work in manual or skilled jobs, and are not regarded as ‘high-flyers’, define success.

Chapter 6 identified some of the factors which were recalled by the respondents as having an effect on their career aspirations when they were children, and on their participation in

adult life. These included parental occupations, parental expectations, range of school curriculum and teaching expertise, attitudes and expectations of significant others, physical access, integration with non-disabled peers, and nature of impairment. Although this thesis has made some important discoveries with regards to what influences the career aspirations of young disabled people, it recognises that this is an under-researched area and deserves more attention. Further, it presents an opportunity to take more of an in-depth look at young disabled people's career decision-making and compare it with the career decision-making of young non-disabled people.

Due to the widespread underemployment and unemployment of disabled people, targeting a research sample of disabled high-flyers was anticipated to be a difficult task therefore the researcher decided to impose as few selection criteria as possible in order to make this study possible. As a consequence, the sample was inclusive of men and women, and people with physical impairments which are either congenital or acquired. Although the differences and similarities between the subgroups were explored, it is felt that the subgroup of women with acquired disabilities was too small for the findings concerning this group to be representative. Moreover a group of three cannot be truthfully representative of all female high-flyers with acquired disabilities. However this is undeniably a fruitful area of research and by extending it to include greater numbers of female high-flyers with acquired disabilities other patterns may be illuminated which were not easy to see in this study.

On a similar note, although only two respondents in the sample were from ethnic

minority backgrounds, the findings showed that this did have a significant impact on their whole approach to work. Both were nurtured within an Asian culture which prizes high standards of achievement in education, and believes one must work hard to get a respectable job, and attain a decent lifestyle. Although, like social class, the impact of ethnic cultural practices was diluted for the disabled high-flyers,, it clearly influenced their persona and way of living. However, the small number of ethnic minority disabled high-flyers in the sample, and the fact they are both men with acquired disabilities means that any findings uncovered by this thesis are not broadly-based enough to discover how ethnicity influences the career development and success of disabled people. Therefore, further research is called for to make such discoveries. In addition, by repeating the study with a sample of disabled high-flyers from ethnic minorities, much can be learnt about how ethnicity and culture influence personal conceptions of career success. Further, having discovered that disability status overrides gender status, it would be interesting to explore the question of whether, and the extent to which, disability overshadows ethnicity.

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APPENDIX A: TYPICAL LETTER TO POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEES

Loughborough University
Leicestershire LE11 3TU

(Respondent's name and
address not included for
confidentiality purposes)

Dear

I am writing to ask if you would be interested to participate in a PhD project I am currently undertaking at Loughborough University Business School. My proposed area of interest is entitled *The Career Success of Disabled High-flyers*. The following is a summary of my research objectives and how I intend to achieve them.

The main objective of the selected focus is to provide a response to the needs of individuals with physical impairments to learn about the lives of individuals, in similar situations to their own, who have 'made it' i.e. reached an intended professional status, income level and/or proximity of authority. It aims to demonstrate how alternative courses of action can be taken and managed to combat physical and social prejudices and obtain desirable outcomes, and how such diversity should be respected and valued by others.

In order to achieve my target, the subjects in my sample need to meet the following criteria:-

1. They are employed in a high-status profession with a significant degree of authority, autonomy and /or power to make judgements. For the purpose of this research, *a profession can be referred to as an occupational role acquired through a hierarchy of specialised training, which performs a service for society and involves a significant degree of responsibility*. Examples of such professions include lawyers, physicians, professors, managers, producers, directors, teachers authors etc.
2. Have reached personally desirable positions of power, wealth and/or prestige in their professions.
3. Have a congenital or acquired physical disability which influences their mobility, dexterity and/ or speech. Typical disabilities may include cerebral palsy, paraplegia, thalidomide, etc.

My proposed method of investigation involves in-depth semi-structured interviews, giving individuals the opportunity to freely discuss their career progression. These interviews may last approximately 1 hour and you have the option for your responses

to remain anonymous if wished. The aim of this is to attain autobiographical material and develop a written portrait of individuals who have aspired in their chosen profession, their varying degrees of success, and the ingredients that contributed to this success. The interview schedule will be divided into 5 sections, which correspond to 5 important influences of career development/success: **Personality, Family/Social background, Education, Work experience/Training, Nature of Disability.**

The reason why this research is so critical, apart from being a significant contribution to knowledge, is to:

1. Provide role models for career-minded young disabled people who may be experiencing difficulties in achieving their desired goals.
2. To identify what attributes are significant for individuals with physical impairments to attain their aspired career goals, and the extent to which they differ from those significant to non-disabled people.

The primary investigation stage of my project is close to the end, so if you could contact me as soon as possible I would be extremely grateful. Furthermore, if you have any questions concerning the proposed investigation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

Sonali Shah

APPENDIX B: TYPICAL LETTER TO ORGANISATIONS

Loughborough University
Leicestershire LE11 3TU

(Organisation's name and
address not included for
confidentiality purposes)

Dear

I am writing to ask if you could help me to identify people who may be interested in participating in a PhD project I am currently undertaking at Loughborough University Business School, entitled *The Career Development/Success of Disabled High-flyers*. The following is a summary of my research objectives and how I intend to achieve them.

The main objective of the selected focus is to provide a response to the needs of individuals with physical impairments to learn about the lives of individuals, in similar situations to their own, who have 'made it' i.e. reached an intended professional status, income level and/or proximity of authority. It aims to demonstrate how alternative courses of action can be taken and managed to combat physical and social prejudices and obtain desirable outcomes, and how such diversity should be respected and valued by others.

In order to achieve my target, the subjects in my sample need to meet the following criteria:-

1. They are employed in a high-status profession with a significant degree of authority, autonomy and /or power to make judgements. For the purpose of this research, *a profession can be referred to as an occupational role acquired through a hierarchy of specialised training, which performs a service for society and involves a significant degree of responsibility*. Examples of such professions include lawyers, physicians, professors, managers, producers, directors, teachers authors etc.
2. Have reached personally desirable positions of power, wealth and/or prestige in their professions.
3. Have a congenital or acquired physical disability which influences their mobility, dexterity and/ or speech. Typical disabilities may include cerebral palsy, paraplegia, thalidomide, etc.

My proposed method of investigation involves in-depth semi-structured interviews, giving individuals the opportunity to freely discuss their career progression. These interviews may last approximately 1 hour. Participants are given the option for their

responses to remain anonymous or not. The aim of this is to attain autobiographical material and develop a written portrait of individuals who have aspired in their chosen profession, their varying degrees of success, and the ingredients that contributed to this success. The interview schedule will be divided into 5 sections, which correspond to 5 important influences of career development/success: **Personality, Family/Social background, Education, Work experience/Training, Nature of Disability.**

The reason why this research is so critical, apart from being a significant contribution to knowledge, is to:

4. Provide role models for career-minded people with disabilities who may be experiencing difficulties in achieving their desired goals.
5. To identify what attributes are significant for individuals with physical impairments to attain their aspired career goals, and the extent to which they differ from those significant to non-disabled people.

If you could contact me as soon as possible I would be extremely grateful. Furthermore, if you have any questions concerning the proposed investigation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

Yours sincerely

Sonali Shah

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Section 1: Work/Career History

How important is your work to you?

- **Explain the work you do?**
 - Disability or Mainstream?
 - Freelance or part of an organisation?
 - How many hours do you tend to work?
- **Can you briefly describe your work history, including the organisations you worked for, positions you held, time spent there?**
 - Has your career progressed in the conventional way, or did you have to take a different route? Why?
 - What have been the major turning points in your career development?
 - Mentors/key people/inspirations that have influenced your progression?
 - Have you any regrets about your working life?

Section 2: Success

What does success mean to you?

- **Do you think you are successful?**
 - How was success defined to you as a child?
- **Any other comments**

Section 3: Personality

How do you feel your personality influences your career success?

- **Locus of control - who do you think controls the rewards you receive?**
 - Would you say luck plays a part in your career success?
 - What traits would you say you have that were most beneficial to your career success?
 - How has your relationship with your family shaped your personality?
 - What motivates you? What satisfies you in terms of your work?
- **Need for Achievement – how strong is your tendency and desire to do things as well and as rapidly as possible?**
 - What factors influence your achievement motivation?
 - While you are striving to meet your goal, you meet obstacles, how do you react?
 - What are the things you require from your job?
 - Are you ultimately satisfied in your career?
- **Any other comments**

Section 4: Education

How has your education influenced your career success?

- **Can you tell me briefly the type of institutions you attended throughout your educational history, mainstream or segregated? Was it your choice?**
 - Advantages
 - Drawbacks
 - Qualifications attained? Out of choice?
 - Do you think that had an impact on your future?
 - How much of your education do you use now?
- **Any other comments**

Section 5: Family

How has your family influenced your career development, occupational choice and success?

- **Relationship and parents**
 - Parental expectations of you
 - Social/home environment - how has it helped your success?
 - Parents' profession
- **Relationship with siblings**
 - Birth order?
 - Were you treated differently from siblings? How?
 - Childhood experiences that have been most significant to your development and success?
- **Any other comments**

Section 6: Disability

What has been the biggest positive and negative influence to your career success?

- **Describe your disability and if it has affected your Occupational choice and career path?**
 - What are the most significant obstacles you have faced in your whole development? How did you handle these obstacles?
 - How has society helped or hindered your career development?
 - Have networks or disability organisations been significant to your career development? Who are they, what do they do? How have they helped you?
- **Any other comments**