

# **A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOURCES OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG BLACK MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS**

by

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## DECLARATION

Student Number: 3137 6789

I declare that

**A qualitative investigation into the sources of job satisfaction among black middle level managers**

is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....  
SONJA C STRYDOM

.....  
DATE

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## **SUMMARY**

This research aimed to qualitatively identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction, gender differences among black middle level managers as well as the impact of afrocentric values. Content and process theories provided the theoretical framework in the identification of determinants of job satisfaction.

Semi-structured interviews were administered to eight employees in the educational and financial sector. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data.

The results indicated that no 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction were identified in the selected sample. Behaviour, perceptions and actions, however, manifested against the background of the South African political and socio-economic history, as well as highlighting the process of acculturation.

Findings referred to the importance of social needs against the background of ubuntu. The role of the supervisor and the necessity of open communication in the workplace were emphasised. Language issues were highlighted as significant in the perception of exclusion in the workplace. The need for recognition of qualifications and skills against the background of affirmative action policies was clear. Participants suggested the significance of personal development as manifested in their need for self-actualisation and self-efficacy. Gender differences were prevalent in all determinants of job satisfaction bar recognition of qualifications in the work environment.

### **Key words**

Job satisfaction, black middle level managers, gender differences, afrocentric values, interpretative phenomenological analysis, communication, recognition, supervisor, self-actualisation, self-efficacy.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Affirmative action legislation, implemented after President Nelson Mandela becoming the first president of a non-racial, democratic country in 1994, provided South Africa with the opportunity to finally abandon the heritage of discrimination and injustice (McFarlin, Coster & Mogale-Pretorius, 1999). Such legislative policies finally paved the way for the employment and recruitment of larger numbers of previously disadvantaged employees (Human, 1996). Soh (2004) argues that, due to the elimination of economic barriers and the abandonment of protective measures, South Africa's economic inadequacies were revealed. Thus, in order to improve its competitive advantage globally, SA can no longer only depend on its mining industry for economic growth. In order to maintain a position as competitor in international markets, South Africa must remain committed in the quest to reduce unemployment and to invest in a productive workforce representative of all its citizens (McFarlin et al., 1999).

Also, the Western modern world and organisations are changing dramatically. Business principles and beliefs of the past are being replaced by a global movement enhanced by changing technologies, improved communication abilities and a changing multi-cultural workforce (James & Snell, 1994). Organisations are obliged to accept these changes and acknowledge the culture employees belong to since it impacts on their beliefs, needs, goals, value systems and so forth. It is argued that culture cannot be adapted to meet the expectations of managerial practices since it can be assumed that employee behaviour in the workplace will be closely linked to the culture they come from (Jaeger, 1990). Also, due to South Africa's history of privileged work positions for mainly white workers, it seems necessary to establish whether dimensions of job satisfaction that were identified from studies with white participants, are similar for black workers.

In addition, with the dramatic increase in recent years of female employees in the labour market, it is undeniable that potential gender differences will intensify in terms of work and family. It is argued that females, specifically those assigned to managerial positions, will not only have the challenge of balancing work and family life, but also have the additional strain of proving themselves in a historically male dominated work environment. It is therefore of interest to establish whether particular gender differences exist between workers.

## 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of urbanisation, millions of African people were culturally affected due to their resettlement in towns and cities. It is also clear that many of these individuals tend to behave according to the situation. In other words, behaviour amongst friends or family in townships differs from the way in which they behave in the workplace. It is therefore evident that it is possible for many individuals to embrace two opposing sets of values depending on the setting. Moreover, although the assumption is made that cultures remain stable over time, it is argued that the African culture, as many others around the world, is evolving and changing to attempt to accommodate the demands of the environment in which African people live and work (Human, 1996).

Due to clear contextual and cultural differences amongst employees, different perceptions regarding management, motivation and professional development are evident in modern organisations. However, it is clear that many white managers are often unable to comprehend the link and connection between work and non-work environments for black workers. It is also evident that white managers often adopt so-called Western or eurocentric managerial approaches which are incompatible with African managerial systems and perceptions (Khoza, 1994). Above-mentioned demands and different perceptions are part of the distinctive history of managerial development in South Africa. Lessem (1994), for instance, is of the opinion that South African managerial development has been characterised by aspects such as autocracy, individualism and rationalism. Consequently, the philosophies of Eastern and African societies focusing on co-operation and communal values were largely discounted. According to Jackson (2011) the rationale behind management forcing a mostly third world workforce to accept Westernised approaches in organisations lies in the developed-developing world paradigm. Such a paradigm implies that organisational acceptance and implementation of Westernised managerial practices will help to solve potential work-related problems and will contribute to the growth in organisations.

Consequently, academic papers as early as the 1980s emphasised a cultural perspective as rationale for under-performing black managers. In one of these papers it was highlighted that the perception exists that, although differences are evident between European and African cultures, the one is still perceived as superior to the other (Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981). For instance, white employees or Europeans are associated with work environments characterised by ambition, individualism and profit-taking whilst black employees favour 'ubuntu', community awareness and sharing (Human, 1996). Therefore, prior to political

change in 1994, management practices were dominated by eurocentric values, but with the incorporation of a more diverse workforce, South African companies were obliged to introduce a more afrocentric managerial approach (Mbigi, 1997).

As a consequence of the first democratic election in 1994, the South African labour market has increasingly employed African people due to affirmative action policies. The South African government adopted affirmative action legislation as a tool to address previous injustice and imbalances in the workplace and used affirmative action as a conversion strategy aiming to strive for equal employment opportunities for all South Africans (Tinarelli, 2000). Affirmative action was therefore deliberately implemented to expedite opportunities for previously disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities. Special emphasis was placed on education, training and development where such practices complement business requirements. This is supported by Combs and Gruhl (1986) who argue that such legislative policies are a means to ensure equality for many disadvantaged groups.

Although many systems were put in place to accommodate the previously disadvantaged, many of these programmes may fail due to organisations' persistence in retaining previous management styles, cultural systems, structures and policies. It is an expectation that new workers will integrate and become accustomed to organisational demands. However, according to many stereotypical viewpoints, those who fail are viewed as individuals not able to adapt to the corporate environment (Adams, 1993). Such inability to integrate and adapt to organisational expectations can have detrimental effects on black employees and can enhance negative perceptions regarding the work environment. It is suggested that stereotypical viewpoints could contribute to disappointment and potential resignation of black employees which will, in turn, strengthen the belief that affirmative action candidates are not skilled and as experienced as their colleagues (Motileng, Wagner & Cassimjee, 2006).

It is evident that South African organisations today have a highly diverse workforce and are thus faced with issues of how this divergence can be managed more adequately. Many different values and value systems exist due to the consolidation of various cultures and therefore, with employees subscribing to different values, the management of human resources and ultimately teams, become increasingly challenging (Johnson & Johnson, 2003).

Above-mentioned circumstances therefore have a significant impact on the experience and perception of the work environment. Robbins (2001) argues that employee attitudes toward involvement in and satisfaction with the job in the organisation have become of imperative

interest to organisational researchers, primarily because of the impact on behaviour at work. According to Friday and Friday (2003), the assumption can be made that highly motivating jobs will probably result in employees being highly satisfied with their work and that quality and effort are put into work practices. Consequently lower absenteeism rates are expected as well as a lesser degree of turnover in the organisation. As expected, if the job is not highly motivating, the opposite could be true. Low job satisfaction can therefore be costly for organisations due to, for example, absenteeism and turnover rates. Over a long period of time, these costs could have a negative and possible detrimental effect on organisations. It is therefore clear that organisations should invest in and investigate motivational factors associated with a job on a regular basis (Friday & Friday, 2003). Not only is the identification of such motivational factors associated with satisfaction important, but it is important to understand any potential cultural differences since organisational demographics have changed dramatically during the past years.

Gender is one of the demographic variables usually discussed with reference to job satisfaction and it is shown why consideration of possible gender differences in work perceptions and attitudes are especially important in the local context. Fricko and Beehr (1992) are of the opinion that many studies were conducted on samples including only males or on samples including both sexes - still with a male majority - without examining gender differences. Consequently, Osipow (1975) points out that the related theories have less applicability for women and other minority groups. For instance, based on the principle of the gender role theory it can be assumed that females, more than males, will view their family responsibility as part of their social identity. When females experience family pressures due to work demands, it is found that they are more inclined to develop negative perceptions regarding work since it directly impacts on their dominant role (Grandey, Cordeiro & Crouter, 2005). Similarly, Kraut and Korman (1998) believe that changes and differences in work values are mainly influenced by the changing demographics and characteristics of South African employees. Booysen (1999) highlights the fact that the increased employment of women has had a major impact on the workplace culture and arrangements, since organisations are being forced to consider more flexible and female-friendly schedules. One should therefore not underestimate the influence and impact of female perceptions and values in the work environment.

Notably, despite gender roles within both work and family domains, it is still expected to observe gender differences due to the traditional social roles attributed to both males and females (Guttek, Searle & Klepa, 1991). From a managerial perspective, these gender differences are most definitely important since it could have a direct effect on the work

attitudes and productivity of workers. Also, despite more females being integrated into the workforce, several studies found that females, more than males, still experience several challenges associated with progression in organisations. This includes stereotyping, biases in promotion and conflict with work and family settlements (Auster, 2001). Furthermore, previous studies indicate that differences still persist in the treatment of male and female supervisors. Some research indicated subordinates' preferences for male managers whilst in some cases females suggested that they trust male managers more than female managers (Jeanquart-Barone & Sekaran, 1994).

According to Mathur-Helm (2005), it is apparent that gender in the South African context is still racially and culturally divided. It reflects similarities with apartheid where inequity was customary between black and white females. Since black females, however, still experience the most disadvantaged positions in society, it is argued that it is not only necessary to examine the discrepancy in numbers of male and females, but also to investigate the impact of racism on specifically black females (Mathur-Helm, 2005). With this history of discrimination and most possibly frustration, it is legitimate to ask whether these experiences could have an influence on the organisational perceptions and attitudes of African workers and specifically female African workers.

According to the Corporate Research Foundation (2003), it is justifiable to focus on black females in the workplace since, from a historical perspective these black women were out of South Africa's economic centre and did not experience the prestige and acknowledgement that other managers have gained during that time period (as cited in Mathur-Helm, 2005). Although it is agreed that both black males and females were denied their basic social, economic and political rights in organisations, it is evident that black females experienced additional challenges (Marks, Hassim, January-Bardill, Khumalo & Olckers, 2000). For instance, it is clear that some black male employees still query the need to liberate black females within the social and work context. It is suggested that males would rather address race-related issues than engage with sensitive gender-related challenges (Marks et al., 2000). Within the context of a male dominated patriarchal environment, black female workers also experienced less training and developmental opportunities than white females. Despite discrimination against both black and white females in the workplace, white females enjoyed close working relations with white male colleagues which contributed to their access to political and social resources and networks (Marks et al., 2000). Erwee (1994) and Marks et al. (2000) are therefore of the opinion that although both races experienced some form of oppression or injustice in the past, black females remain the group that enjoyed far less progression or liberation than their white counterparts.



As mentioned previously, numerous South Africa's organisational management practices and policies are associated with European and American managerial methods and ideas (April & Ephraim, 2006). The problem, however, is that such a dependence on Western, international models complicate efforts to integrate a diverse South African workforce. Consequently Booyesen (2001) is of the opinion that South African managerial models should reflect a more cohesive and collective cultural experience.

All levels in an organisation are important and have their own unique functions in their contribution to the organisation's competitive advantage. The significance of middle managers is that they are viewed as the mouthpiece of senior management in sharing policies, decisions and actions with an often negative and sceptical workforce (Denham, Ackers & Travers, 1997). Foy (1994) therefore argues that the assumption of middle management being a channel between senior management and workers, still exists (as cited in Denham et al., 1997). Klein (1984) states that middle level managers might be in a difficult situation in that they may not agree with decisions made by senior management, but have no choice in sharing it with employees in the lower levels of the hierarchy. Consequently, in order to address potential cognitive dissonance, middle level managers are forced to change either their attitude or their behaviour in order to avoid work-related stress. A coping mechanism will either be to accept and proclaim the merits of decisions or to play a part in questioning such decisions (Denham et al., 1997).

Mintzberg (1973) is therefore of the opinion that top management must be in touch with the feelings and perceptions of middle managers in order to enable them to indicate whether the policies that management have put in place are in fact leading to the desired outcomes. The middle level manager's attitude is determined by the specific abilities, needs and values he or she brings to the organisation. Therefore these attitudes could have an effect on the effort the middle manager displays in trying to reach the organisational goals.

Finally, within the context of job satisfaction, it is therefore necessary not only to be aware of South Africa's socio-political background, but also to acknowledge changing policies and structures within the organisation. It is therefore important to highlight the pivotal role a manager played in dealing with the diverse workforce characterising South African organisations in the past one and a half decades. Not only is the role of managers to support and communicate changing policies, but also to help integrate and accommodate both males and females in the organisation. Due to the historical background of South African organisations, special emphasis needs to be placed on the integration and support of black women.

Furthermore, within the culturally diverse South African environment, the needs and perceptions of different cultural groups are important in order to work towards a productive and motivated work force that can compete with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to address the issues mentioned, the emphasis of this investigation was specifically on black middle level managers' experiences with regards to their current work environment. Also, an attempt was made to explore potential gender differences between the middle level managers.

### **1.1.1 The role and impact of the African culture**

Khoza (1994) describes afrocentric values as the attempt to enclose African culture, mythology, history and so forth in one belief system. From a managerial perspective the result is ubuntu – the attempt to acknowledge and incorporate the organisation into one unified community. According to Mbigi and Maree (1995), ubuntu is the metaphor for the reference to group unity in many cultures across Africa. The main emphasis of ubuntu is on sharing, supporting and cooperating with one another. From a historical perspective, cooperation and unity was necessary for African tribes to survive in times of hardship and poverty. The authors are of the opinion that the essence of ubuntu should be incorporated into Western managerial policies and systems since the collective is omnipresent among many Africans. Ubuntu is in contrast to the Western paradigm of individualism, one-sided decision making and the encouragement of competitiveness and it is argued that many management principles can evolve from African tribes, such as interdependence, trust and spiritualism (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

It remains a challenge to consider the incorporation of such values into any eurocentric-driven organisation. For instance, according to the philosophy of ubuntu, trust and transparency remains essential in creating an interdependent society.

For instance, McFarlin et al. (1999) argue that trust is essential for any organisation to reach its full potential. A value system embedded in personal trust sends the message of an organisation's high regard of personal relations nestled in solidarity. Such practices, which are highly regarded in African cultures, attempt to remove feelings of doubt and uncertainty in the organisation. Unfortunately, it seems as if many South African organisations still follow a more individualistic approach to management and leadership. For instance, white or eurocentric organisations usually use formal policies and procedures to encourage the perception of equality. These approaches are normally viewed as 'cold' and create opportunities for potential conflict and antagonistic relationships – contrary to the importance

and significance of trust (Koopman, 1994). However, according to Harris and Hartman (2002), many organisations view such policies as acceptable institutional measures to protect and support employees in times of change. As with the importance of corporate trust, it is also argued that the employee is a member of an organisational community where certain rules and regulations apply to define and simplify the nature of interpersonal relations within such a community. Within an interdependent community success is associated with a humane approach towards business ventures where cooperation in interpersonal relations is viewed as essential (McFarlin et al., 1999).

It is clear that all the features and principles of ubuntu are linked with each other and cannot be viewed and experienced in isolation. As a result, it will be clear that management practices – with their current focus mainly on the individual, will have to be reconsidered.

For instance, the role of leadership is also influenced by the importance and priority of interdependence. Within the African communities, leaders are perceived as individuals worthy of respect and dignity. Although such leaders have a lot of power and influence, it is still expected of them to rule and manage in a less formal, approachable way where no secrets exist. The ultimate goal of such a leader remains to encourage debate and discussions in order to reach general agreement (McFarlin et al., 1999).

The acceptance of ubuntu as a philosophy in organisations has clear implications in the development of training programmes and the establishment of a corporate culture. In order to affiliate itself with the African value system, organisations must have the support of employees from the onset. In order to achieve it, organisations are encouraged to establish open forums where all members can voice their opinions and thoughts (McFarlin et al., 1999). In order to understand and manage the African employee more effectively, top management needs to be aware of the influence of ubuntu and African values on their employees. Ignoring the influence of unique cultural and historical backgrounds of employees, could result in a workforce which is alienated and not working to their fullest potential. In order to assist the researcher in the investigation of potential cultural differences of employees, it is argued that the participants' identification of specific dimensions of job satisfaction will highlight their unique needs associated with their place of work.

### **1.1.2 The role of gender when considering job satisfaction**

It is clear from the literature that different dimensions of job satisfaction are important to respondents participating in research studies.

Although females represent over half of trained workers, they are not proportionally represented in managerial positions with executive authority (Whelan-Berry & Gordon, 2000). Valentine (2001) goes further to claim that females are often barred from professional and social networking opportunities due to the nature of their assignments or the corporate culture. Also, in a study by Lyness and Thompson (2000) on male and female executives, it was found that females indicated more career barriers and a greater need to prove themselves in the work environment than males.

With reference to leadership qualities, females are often associated with a passive, emotionally unstable, relationship-oriented management style (Heilman, 1997), whilst the task-oriented style of leadership preferred by management and associated with masculine preferences, is seldom associated with female managers (Rozier, 1996).

With reference to female career stages, Auster (2001) is of the opinion that mid-career often resembles the time when females begin to experience the impact of gender biases and the impediment on promotion. Several studies have indicated that unconcealed and concealed biases towards females become more evident when they have reached positions of influence and authority (Auster, 2001).

However, a study done by Ondrack and Fletcher (1987) on the effects of employment equity regulations and guidelines in an insurance company in Canada points to a so-called 'backlash' experienced by managerial males. A backlash is the reaction of managerial males who believe that they have been deprived of certain organisational advantages they assumed were the norm or rightfully theirs. Such a perception can result in lower levels of satisfaction with their own progress. This is supported by Faludi (1991) who argues that backlash has become a real occurrence in organisations where females are favoured in positions previously controlled by males.

Chiu (1998) is of the opinion that if the assumption can be made that gender differences in job satisfaction are not consistent across vocational levels, the same may be argued for sources of job satisfaction. According to the assumptions of homophily, it is of importance to create similarity amongst those in jobs with high levels of power and influence (Kanter,

1977). Similar values are of importance because it is argued that individuals are more prone to share power with those they trust, and trust is assisted by similar values. Such an assumption will suggest that males and females are more similar at higher levels in the organisation than lower levels. A prediction derived from this theory will therefore suggest that there will be high levels of similarity amongst professional males and females and that they will share similar job expectations. Lower levels of job satisfaction amongst professional females will be experienced when they encounter some form of discrimination in the workplace (Chiu, 1998).

However, it seems as if there is a gender gap among general samples of professionals. For example, Shapiro and Stern (1975) suggest that professional women have lower levels of job satisfaction than professional males. In comparison with females, they found that males in higher levels in the organisation experienced higher levels of satisfaction with rewards and promotional opportunities while the reverse is experienced in lower levels of the organisation (Chiu, 1998).

### **1.1.3 The role of black African females**

Many research studies and theories dealing with psychology and the world of work originated from the experiences of men. In cases where females were included in research, it was assumed that their experiences were in line with those of males. Often females were also included in groups with less influence (i.e. minority groups). It is suggested that from an employer, organisational and trade union perspective the belief still remains that work is of lesser importance to females than to males (Statt, 2004).

In addition, Mathur-Helm (2005) argues that South African females, regardless of their race, have been viewed as second class citizens in their society. Laws and policies in the past predominantly favoured particularly white males. From a socio-cultural perspective, Mathur-Helm (2005) goes as far as to argue that all females, irrespective of their particular culture, are viewed as inferior to males in both private and public domains. This result in an unequal distribution of resources such as training, development and income since an imbalance of influence exists between males and females. Currently South Africa is attempting to endorse the rights of all South African citizens in order to meet global demands and needs. New policies and strategies attempt to acknowledge equal rights for all males and females and to improve the worth of all women in organisations (Mathur-Helm, 2005).

In recent years South Africa invested in projects and research focusing on challenges and difficulties females experience in various positions in the workplace. Examples of such attempts come from the National Women's Empowerment Policy, the UN Conventions on Women, the 1993 Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Reconstruction and Development Program of 1994 and the National Report on the Status of Women in South Africa (Mathur-Helm, 2005).

Women face many challenges when being promoted to managerial positions. One such a problem is the absence of a role model who can guide them into the particular role of a manager. Males do not face the same difficulties since they model themselves on the behaviour of their male supervisors. Another challenge females have to deal with is the negative behaviour and perceptions of males they have to manage. Often males regard female managers as a threat to their competence and authority and therefore they display negative attitudes towards their female supervisors (Statt, 2004). It is suggested that black females experience various obstacles in obtaining respect and managerial positions in the South African context (Marks et al., 2000). However, according to studies, a similar dilemma is prevalent in countries such as the USA. Although representing the largest minority group within American organisations, black females have significantly different career-related experiences than white females. Due to different historical, social, political and economic resources, these females develop a work identity and experience career progression in a different manner than their white counterparts (Davidson & Burke, 2004). Although legislation encourages the prominent role of women in society and the workforce, more research is needed focusing on African females and their unique experiences against the current historical, socio-economic and political environment.

#### **1.1.4 Hierarchy in South African organisations**

Work relationships in bureaucratic organisations are often viewed as formal interactions associated with structured and acceptable hierarchical guidelines which are enhanced by the acceptance of various organisational regulations, policies and rules. Such a standardised approach encourages acceptable organisational behaviour and routine activities without the subjective judgement of employees and management. It is clear that such a managerial style discounts the importance of interpersonal relations and the values of its employees (Bellingan-Timmer, 2004).

Clearly it is evident that organisations represent one of the most intricate social formations currently due to their active character. Organisations become competitive due to the active role played by their committed and involved employees. The potential of positive outcomes is dependent on the interdependent interaction between organisations and their employees since both parties have the potential to impact one another (Sempane, Rieger & Roodt, 2002). Organisational variables such as general working conditions, organisational structure, organisational size, remuneration, recognition and leadership have a direct impact on employees' level of job satisfaction and consequently result and contribute to organisational climate (Peterson, 1995).

In addition, human assets remain the most important resource of any organisation. It can be argued that only organisations that value their employees to the same extent as their financial resources are set to be successful in the current economic environment (Cavaleros, Van Vuuren & Visser, 2002). As a result, the development of human potential in organisations is evolving in importance and priority. However, in order for human resource practitioners to implement successful developmental opportunities for employees, they have to consider and acknowledge the diverse psychological, social and economic needs of individuals (Cavaleros, Van Vuuren & Visser, 2002). After the 1994 elections, South African organisations have been challenged with the increasingly diverse nature of its employees and are obliged to take such differences into account in their daily running (Human, 1996). It would be of the utmost importance for any organisation to identify the diverse cultural perceptions regarding the world of work since it could have a direct influence on attitudes, satisfaction and loyalty towards the institution.

In order to address some of these potential issues in organisations, management is viewed as an important vehicle of communication with executives and stakeholders. Since specifically middle level managers are seen as the shield between executives and workers they have an important role to play in the organisation when communicating strategic policies and decisions to workers lower in the organisational hierarchy (Drucker, 1961). In contrast with executives who are not in direct contact with employees, it is expected of middle level managers to not only share information but also to focus on the humanitarian aspects of employee relations (Maritz, 2002). Therefore, the role of middle level managers in organisations is often understated and should enjoy more attention with regards to not only their role in organisations, but also dimensions and aspects of the job that could contribute to an increase in their levels of job satisfaction. This will inevitably affect not only the organisation and its strategic aims and goals, but also influence subordinates who are motivated and encouraged to share the organisational vision.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions are related to the literature study:

- Which dimensions can be identified from the models and theories of job satisfaction?
- How are traditional afrocentric values of importance to black employees in South African organisations?
- Are there clear gender differences with regards to dimensions of job satisfaction?
- Which job-related demands on middle level managers could impact on job satisfaction?

The following questions are related to the empirical investigation:

- Which qualitative theoretical framework will be most appropriate to explore the sources of job satisfaction among black South African middle level managers?
- Are there any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction identified by male and female blacks?
- Are there qualitative differences of job satisfaction among male and female blacks?
- Do black middle level managers identify afrocentric values of significant importance to their experiences of job satisfaction in their current work environment?

## **1.3 RESEARCH AIMS**

The aims of the literature study were:

- To discuss theories and models related to dimensions of job satisfaction.
- To outline the afrocentric values of black employees in South African organisations.
- To give an overview of the gender differences in the dimensions of job satisfaction.
- To elaborate on specific job demands that impact on the experience of job satisfaction among middle level managers.

The aims of the empirical investigation were:

- To gain an understanding of an appropriate interpretivist framework to investigate the sources of job satisfaction among black South African middle level managers.



- To identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction highlighted by black middle level managers.
- To investigate any qualitative differences in job satisfaction between male and female black middle level managers.
- To identify any afrocentric values of significant importance to the experience of job satisfaction among black middle level managers.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

In order to identify dimensions of job satisfaction, existing theories and models of job satisfaction are studied primarily quantitatively. These investigations mainly follow a eurocentric approach without acknowledging the potential extraneous impact of the role of the African culture. Therefore, it is argued that a qualitative approach as an in-depth study is appropriate since the aim is to identify potential qualitative differences in perceptions of work. Such an approach accommodates the afrocentric culture and can contribute to existing findings in highlighting any potential differences between eurocentric and afrocentric perceptions of work.

The concept of a paradigm is essential and central to all research processes (Mangan, Lalwani & Gardner, 2004). A paradigm is therefore seen as the process in which a general theory represents the nature of the specific scientific undertaking. Wittgenstein (1961) suggests that a paradigm is a 'world view'.

From a historical perspective it is clear that psychology was primarily concerned with being exhaustively scientific in the research process. Coolican (2004) rightly points out that it often seemed as though psychology has gone too far in its attempts to be as scientific as possible when over-emphasising aspects that even 'true' science are not as meticulous about. As a result of these attempts, the interpretivist framework gradually started to move away from positivism to investigations where interpretation and understanding of meaning are more dominant than purely analysing scientific data. In the latter, the role of the researcher as co-designer in the research process became increasingly imperative (Coolican, 2004).

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004), the fundamental reason for the shift from positivism to interpretivism is the fact that researchers came to acknowledge that observations are unreliable and that all developed theories can be revised. In the interpretive framework the key principle remains 'uncertainty' since this approach claims that

the goal of science is to be correct in interpreting and understanding the various realities of the individual, whilst positivism aims to uncover the 'truth'. Followers of the interpretive paradigm are of the opinion that scientific methods can only provide the researcher with surmised truths (Henning et al., 2004).

The so-called 'new paradigm' encourages a holistic approach to psychological research by acknowledging and focusing on the meanings of actions and activities in the social environment without aiming to investigate 'objective' isolated units of behaviour. It is furthermore argued that research should take place in natural settings in order to allow participants to act normally and to reflect life naturally. For these requirements to be acknowledged, information gathering techniques should be qualitative. It is therefore clear that the personal interpretations of participants are the most important data or starting point in the research process (Coolican, 2004).

From a qualitative perspective, the main focus remains the reliance on the subjective experiences and viewpoints of the subjects that are being studied (Creswell, 2009). Therefore questions become broad and non-specific in order to stimulate discussion of certain topics of interest. It is argued that the more open-ended the questions, the more the researcher is forced to listen tentatively and carefully to help make sense of the subjective experiences of the subject. Importantly, Creswell (2009) also believes that subjective meanings and interpretations are often directed and guided by historical and social phenomena influencing both subject and researcher. The subjective meanings are not merely forced onto individuals, but are formed by means of interaction with others and the historical and cultural norms they live in.

The qualitative researcher is interested in the process of interaction among subjects or individuals, the context in which subjects work and live as well as the personal acknowledgement that his or her own background and experiences can influence the interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2009).

A theoretical framework is essential in order to position research in a specific field, subject or discipline. This conceptual framework will help the researcher to put him or herself in accord with the requirements of the research. It is viewed as essentially the place where the prerequisite ideology to qualitative research can be discussed (Holliday, 2001). Qualitative researchers are therefore obliged to identify and highlight their potential biases through their particular ideology or conceptual framework of choice. It evolves into a place where the

special interests of the researcher become explicit since there is no design free of bias (Holliday, 2001).

In addition, Henning et al. (2004) claim that the ontological and epistemological position of the investigator will guide the research questions and have an impact on how the investigation will be designed. It is argued that methodologies will be selected in order to complement the research questions, highlight the investigator's knowledge of the importance of language and acknowledge the role and impact of theory in data interpretation. The potential impact and influence of politics and ideology in the manifestation of the data is also linked to the chosen methodologies. Henning et al. (2004) suggest that one of the key characteristics of qualitative studies is the impact and influence of language and the meaning of the language presented in the data.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design needs to follow logically from the research problem and should include a guide on how to address the problems. Furthermore, the design should also indicate whether a quantitative or qualitative approach is most suitable for the investigation. Easterbury-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991) argue that there are several reasons why it is important to understand the philosophical aspects related to qualitative research. It can, for instance, help to clarify the chosen research paradigm, it could help the researcher to decide which designs are appropriate and not appropriate in studying the chosen phenomenon, and finally, it could help the researcher to identify designs that are new to his previous research experiences.

Case studies are usually used to further an in depth understanding of not only the chosen phenomena, but also those involved in the case. This type of design is employed to increase understanding in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. There are examples of case studies where data is collected within controlled boundaries which result in statistical analysis and a more statistical discourse. This process highlights the positivist nature of the research paradigm (Henning et al., 2004). Contrary to this, the researcher can choose to select qualitative research methods which provide the investigator with more freedom and flexibility. Data collected within such a paradigm could include for example non-verbal utterances, body language or conversations (Henning et al., 2004). In the current investigation, a case study would have been appropriate since the ratio of

dimensions identified can be analysed quantitatively, but similarly, qualitative analysis can contribute to the identification and description of 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction.

Different methods of data collection can be integrated into case studies. To enhance the holistic nature of selected phenomena, researchers often employ both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. For example, hybrid discourse can be associated with statistical analysis of the meaning and impact of data as well as the hermeneutical, phenomenological and discursive influences in the research process. The research question therefore remains one of the main guides in the methodological issues of data collection and analysis (Henning et al., 2004).

Smith (1987) is of the opinion that the researcher should focus on the process rather than the actual outcome, the context as opposed to specific variables and the journey associated with the discovery as opposed to the need to confirm a particular hypothesis or prediction. Case studies are associated with a study of unit with particular and clear boundaries. Therefore, critical and important parts of the investigation remain aspects such as the where, what and how of the chosen phenomenon as well as the context of the unit of study (Henning et al., 2004).

Since the present study involved black African middle level managers, the researcher was aware of the possible influences of race, culture and gender on the research process. The participants' historic and socio-economic background would have influenced their perceptions and beliefs. Therefore, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered instead of a case study. Although similar in various respects such as analysing the data descriptively and interpretively and the significance of hermeneutics and discursive meanings, case studies have identifiable boundaries which are not applicable to the phenomenological lived world of the selected sample. It is also proposed that IPA would place more emphasis on the sense making aspect of the phenomenon - from both the researcher's and participants' perspective. Both researcher and participant were trying to understand phenomena that had an impact on them in different ways. Due to the shared historical experiences and appreciation, the emphasis of emphatic hermeneutics was also argued as more appropriate with the selected sample. In addition, critical questioning contributed to the analytical process of identifying factors associated with job satisfaction.

IPA consists of three main philosophical branches. The first refers to the way in which participants make sense of their main life experiences, or rather, the chosen phenomena. IPA is therefore phenomenological in aiming to explore these experiences with the

participants. In essence, phenomenology is the study of experience. The researcher is specifically interested in how these lived experiences impact on them significantly. For psychologists it provides a multi-layered and rich source of information on how to analyse, explain and understand lived experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

IPA is interested in an all-inclusive unit of knowledge and the acknowledgement that this unit is of great significance in the participant's life. In order to fully understand such a unit, the researcher separates the different aspects and parts, but aims to connect them with some form of common aspect. The aim of the research interview is then to guide the participant to recall and explain the different parts, their connection with each other as well as potential common meaning (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The second theoretical branch of IPA focuses on hermeneutics. The researcher is interested in interpreting these events and lived experiences as shared by the participants. IPA is of the opinion that all humans strive to make sense of life experiences and will therefore be interested in finding out how participants analyse and interpret the significant experiences as highlighted in the research study. However, it is also acknowledged that the researcher will only be able to access information shared by the participants and consequently it is expected that the researcher needs to interpret some of the content from the participant's account in order to try and make sense of it (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). A double hermeneutic is therefore applicable in IPA since not only the participant is attempting to make sense of shared experiences, but the investigator also becomes involved in interpreting the shared knowledge (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA is also referred to as ideographic since it pledges to examine the particulars of a chosen case in full detail. In other words, the researcher is interested in everything the participant has to share and how he or she makes sense of it. It is therefore clear that usually a small number of participants are chosen to participate in the research process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

The purpose of IPA is to follow a detailed examination of participants' sense making of their personal, social and cultural domains. It is furthermore argued that the particular meanings of events or experiences in their worlds will be of particular interest in an IPA study. Instead of attempting an objective or independent statement of the event or experience, the approach emphasises the phenomenological aspects by trying to investigate the unique, personal experiences and perceptions of the participant. Simultaneously, IPA also supports the notion that the research process is an engaging event for both participant and

researcher. The researcher attempts to make sense of the personal world and experiences of the participant, but acknowledges that it will never entail complete understanding due to the researcher's own personal viewpoints and impressions. These experiences of the researcher are, however, necessary to help make sense of the participant's immediate environment through the process of interpretation. It therefore requires a multi-level process of interpretation (Smith, 2004).

According to Packer and Addison (1989), there is an intellectual link between interpretation and hermeneutics since it is not only the participants who are attempting to make sense of their own worlds, but also the investigator attempting to interpret and make sense of the participants' process of interpretation.

Smith (2004) points out that several qualitative interpretative positions are available and that IPA uses integrated questioning and empathic hermeneutics. As mentioned earlier, the IPA researcher aims to understand the experiences of the participants and will take their side in this process of interpretation. This is called a 'double hermeneutic' (Smith & Osborn, 2008). It is a procedure whereby the researcher attempts to make sense of the process in which the participant is trying to understand his lived experiences. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) argue that the participant's attempt to make sense is viewed as the first level whilst the researcher's sense-making attempt is the second level. Another viewpoint that explains why IPA is characterised as double hermeneutics is based on Ricoeur's (1970) assumption that IPA distinguishes between two expansive positions, namely the hermeneutics of empathy and the hermeneutics of suspicion. From an empathic perspective the researcher and participant attempt to recreate the original experience and in the latter, theoretical perspectives from outside the research process are used to clarify and explain the phenomena (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

It is highlighted that IPA has a theoretical responsibility to the participant with reference to sharing ideas and experiences. However, IPA also acknowledges the intellectual, emotional, physical and linguistic variables which lead to the link between the individual's thinking, communication and emotional processes. IPA researchers are sensitive in acknowledging that these connections are often complex and that participants have difficulty communicating directly what they are experiencing and thinking. The researcher needs to acknowledge that there are particular reasons why they choose not to share feelings and experiences and it is the task of the researcher to interpret the emotional and cognitive condition of the participant in this process. The cognitive paradigm is central in IPA since it

emphasises the attempt to make sense by both the participant and researcher and therefore highlights the role of cognition in the analytical process (Smith, 2004).

It is argued that the hermeneutic circle is one of the most profound facets of the hermeneutic theory. This concept highlights the interactive relationships between different parts as well as the whole at different levels. In order to make sense of a specific part, you need to look at the whole, and when interested in the whole, the different parts need to be taken into consideration. Although being criticised for its circular characteristic, it is claimed that it highlights the interpretative process effectively and refers to a 'non-linear style of thinking' and sense-making (Smith et al., 2009).

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHOD**

IPA projects usually use small samples. Since the main aim is to analyse participants' transcripts in depth and detail, the emphasis moves away from generalisations normally found in larger samples. The IPA researcher attempts to find a reasonable homogeneous sample since it is not very logical to think in terms of a sample representing the whole population if only six participants are being used. IPA rather attempts the opposite by trying to find a small group with common characteristics for whom the research question will be important and applicable (Smith, 2004). It is, however, mentioned that there are no correct and predetermined sample size to consider in IPA. The sample size is associated with various variables such as the depth of detail of each case and the restrictions and challenges the researcher is facing. As a guide, it is suggested to consider a sample size of five to six participants since it provides enough detail to investigate and identify potential similarities and differences between participant responses (Smith, 2004). Due to the small nature of the sample, issues of validity and reliability could be raised. Willig (2001) is, however, of the opinion that qualitative researchers address such issues in various ways. Validity is ensured by means of data collection taking place in real-life settings, for example participants were at work during the interviews. The reflective nature of the research process also contributes to higher levels of validity. The researcher continuously evaluates the process as well as his or her role in the research.

Sample selection is purposeful since the participants need to have the ability to offer insight into a particular phenomenon. The majority of participants are contacted through referral, potentially due to the researcher's own contacts or snowballing where the participants refer potential candidates. The selection criteria for participants are that they have access to the

phenomenon being studied. It is therefore argued that they are associated with a personal perspective, rather than a specific chosen population (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Willig, 2001).

In the proposed investigation, four black male and four black female middle level managers were approached to participate in the project. The sampling method was purposeful of nature with colleagues in various organisations assisting in identifying potential candidates for the research project. The managers represent different organisations associated with education and manufacturing. All managers are from the traditional black African tribes of Nguni or Xhosa with English as their second language. One participant was born and raised in Namibia before continuing her education in South Africa.

A qualitative interview is defined as a continuous face-to-face meeting between the interviewer and interviewee aiming to understand the respondent's perception of and perspective on his or her life, personal experiences or situations conveyed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The qualitative interview, with its strengths and weaknesses, still remains a valuable research tool but its use is closely associated with the relevance of the research question (Botha, 2001). The researcher makes an effort to develop a relationship with the respondent. Initially, the researcher has an idea of broad questions and areas of interest to pursue. Simultaneously, as far as possible, the researcher wishes to attempt to enter the psychological and social world of the respondent. In a way, the respondent begins to dictate the direction of the interview and possibly introduces topics and issues not thought of previously by the researcher. In such a relationship, the respondent is viewed as the experimental expert on the chosen topic of investigation and should therefore be allowed and encouraged to tell his or her story (Botha, 2001).

In this project, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore sources of job satisfaction. Since the researcher resided abroad at the time of the study, potential participants were approached with the help of friends and ex-colleagues in South Africa. Telephonic interviews were conducted with the aid of a digital voice recorder. An interview guide was used by the researcher to probe into the main areas of interest. These topics were based on findings in the literature with regards to dimensions of job satisfaction and the role and impact of the African culture.

When deciding how to transform qualitative raw data to final meaningful patterns, the researcher has various options. Many researchers choose to use the well-known methods



of coding data and grouping it into small meaningful units which is then grouped into specific categories. However, when deciding to use a method of interpretative research, it is not simply aiming at gathering simplified data. The data is inevitably changed by the method of access, systemisation, organisation and finally, rationalisation. The methodological position of the investigation of the study will guide the researcher to various options, from content analysis to grounded theory analysis (Henning et al., 2004). In order to analyse data, it is divided into small, meaningful themes, units or patterns. As Mouton (2001) argues, the main objective of analysis remains the process of understanding the various elements associated with variables, concepts or constructs in order to identify any clear themes, patterns of trends.

Within the process of interpretation, data is merged into larger units of understanding. Results and findings are furthermore incorporated into theoretical paradigms to investigate whether the researcher's interpretations are supported or not. Mouton (2001) also argues that interpretation refers to the process of acknowledging any other contradicting interpretations of data and highlighting any level of support the data provide to the chosen interpretation.

It is assumed that the IPA researcher is interested in the psychological experiences of the participant. These experiences can include perceptions uttered in conversations with the participant or, alternatively, a belief in the contribution of the participant's life story to his or her unique identity. Meaning remains the central theme since the researcher attempts to understand and interpret the content and complex relationship without attempting to measure the frequency of concepts mentioned. The researcher therefore becomes involved with an interpretative rapport with the transcript (Smith, 2004).

There are two phases in the analysis of the responsive interview. This firstly includes the preparation of the transcripts by finding, refining and elaborating on constructs, themes and events. These aspects are then coded in order to recapture what interviewees have said about the specific themes or constructs. In the second phase the researcher has an option of various paths such as the comparison of themes across the different interviews or to join different topics and themes from different interviews in order to describe a specific phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In the current investigation the researcher opted for the latter where different concepts and themes from the interviews were joined and contextualised in order to create an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of participants.

Smith (2004) points out that the IPA researcher will look for specific themes in the first case. The researcher will highlight any important or interesting aspects pointed out by the participants. Secondly, the researcher identifies emerging themes within the transcript. This is followed by an attempt to connect the themes by engaging in a more analytical process. This analytical process will produce a cluster or table of themes which highlights the main concerns of the participant on the particular topic of interest. Subordinate themes evolve out of the initial themes identified by the researcher. The analyst prioritises the data and eventually produces clear main and subordinate themes as identified in each transcript.

It is argued by Coolican (2004) that researchers need to consider a variety of techniques when attempting to improve the reliability and validity of qualitative analysis. This includes techniques such as generalisation, transferability, inter-rater reliability, respondent validation and triangulation. For this specific project, respondent validation was used where interviewees had the opportunity to comment on the interview transcripts. The techniques employed in this project are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Keats (2000) highlights various ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration when planning and conducting qualitative interviews. One of the most important ethical requirements is that the interviewer should introduce himself as honestly and openly as possible in the given circumstances. If anonymity is agreed, it suggests that no names must be used during the interview process and the identity of the participant will not be shared in any records or documentation. It is important to note that confidentiality and anonymity differ from each other as confidentiality implies that the participant's name may be used throughout the interview, but the participant is informed that the information will not be disclosed to any other person or institution in a way which could potentially identify the interviewee. To adhere to confidentiality, the researcher can only discuss the results and their meanings in the report. It is also of importance to state the real purpose of the investigation and interview when obtaining the respondent's consent to participate in the research process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Potential ethical considerations within the current investigation were to clarify the aim of the project and consequent interview and clearly communicate to the respondents their right to withdraw at any stage of the investigation. Respondents were fully debriefed once the interviews were completed and also ensured of the confidentiality of their data. It was explained to them that the interviews would be transcribed as part of the thesis, but that their identities and organisations would remain confidential.

## **1.7 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapters 2 and 3 refer to the literature survey on job satisfaction. Chapter 2 deals with the different theoretical approaches towards job satisfaction. This includes both theories and models of job satisfaction and work motivation which are closely related as well as possible dimensions of job satisfaction that were considered in formulating the interview questions and analysing the data. Chapter 3 highlights the role of gender, culture and middle level management within job satisfaction. Different gender and cultural perceptions regarding job satisfaction are discussed and reference is made to the role of ubuntu in the African culture. The importance of middle level management within an organisation is outlined and focus is placed on the demands and expectations placed on middle level managers. Chapter 4 refers to the qualitative method of investigation, participants used, the method of data collection and the methods of data analysis and interpretation. The chapter also highlights the philosophical background contributing to the decision to use Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as data analysis methodology. Chapter 5 discusses the results obtained whilst Chapter 6 includes conclusions based on the results and further recommendations.

### **Summary**

The problem statement refers to how historical and multi-cultural variables could impact on levels of job satisfaction of African middle level managers. Factors such as the role of females in organisations and ubuntu were mentioned. This socio-political reality is proposed to have had an impact on sources of job satisfaction among black middle level managers in South African organisations. Research questions and research aims were consequently developed and the design and methodology outlined that were used to clarify these questions. This chapter concludes with a layout of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed definition of job satisfaction, as well as an overview of the most influential and relevant theories and models of job satisfaction suitable for the study. Relevant models of worker motivation are also mentioned due to its correlation with models of job satisfaction. The chapter will also explore potential significant dimensions of job satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF JOB SATISFACTION**

There are comprehensive collections in research on employee job satisfaction. This research started as early as the 1930s. These studies focused on the impact and relevance of job satisfaction on industrial, social and even economic performance (Tuch & Martin, 1991). According to Locke (1969), these studies resulted in as many as 4000 published articles by the end of the 1960s. No indication was found in current literature of the number of studies conducted into the field until recently.

Due to the complexity and vast amount of research on the topic, the aim of this study is not to give an all-inclusive analysis and overview of all theories, studies or models on job satisfaction, but rather to highlight some of the influential, applicable and sometimes controversial explanations of job satisfaction.

#### **2.1 DEFINING JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction can be viewed as global or specific. It implies that in certain circumstances job satisfaction is referred to as satisfaction with the whole situation. On the other hand, it could be seen as an employee's feelings towards a specific aspect or dimension of the work environment which is then called facet satisfaction (Srivastava, 2005).

From an earlier perspective, Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967) referred to job satisfaction as the actual intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of the individual. McCormick and Illgen (1985) support this viewpoint by also distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. These authors see intrinsic satisfaction as the experience of a sense of intrinsic competences and extrinsic satisfaction as contentment derived from external rewards.

Furthermore, Bergmann (1981) argues that the sources of job satisfaction are viewed as either being influenced by an employee's individual differences or the impact of organisational attributes on such a perception. From an individual differences perspective, one can argue that job satisfaction is a result of an individual's aspirations, needs, values, and so forth (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969).

In addition, Mullins (2002) states that job satisfaction is viewed as a complicated and multi-faceted concept, which has different meanings for different employees. This assumption is

supported by Ghiselli and Brown (1955) who believe that job satisfaction is influenced by many variables and that a small proportion of employees are satisfied with all aspects of their jobs. Therefore, in order to obtain more accurate results, it has been widely accepted to use a multi-dimensional approach towards job satisfaction (Beck, 1983; Bergmann, 1981; McShane & Von Glinow, 2005).

There are numerous different definitions of job satisfaction in the literature. The majority of these definitions or explanations refer to an individual's perceptions or affective responses regarding his job. It is, however, important to distinguish between perception and affective responses. Although both variables are obviously subjective and very closely linked, one could argue that perceptions reflect more the cognitive processes of the employee whereas affect is an emotional response. Consequently, Illies and Judge (2004) acknowledge the fact that by defining job satisfaction, an emotional component is present, but argue in addition that one also needs to acknowledge the cognitive aspect since it is also part of the evaluation of the job. They argue furthermore that job satisfaction has been measured by retrospective studies that are better suited to measure cognitive assessments rather than the affective components.

McCormick and Ilgen (1985) regard job satisfaction on a continuum of perceptions ranging from positive to negative. In addition, Luthans (1998) views job satisfaction as a consequence of workers' views on the quality of provision to variables perceived as important to them. He therefore also highlights the importance of an employee's perceptions about his or her work.

Fisher (2000), however, argues that the emotional aspects of the measurement of job satisfaction have been neglected in general. This viewpoint is supported by Illies and Judge (2004) who point out that one needs to focus also on the affective heritage and consequences of job satisfaction when conducting research into the field. Dawis and Lofquist (1984) also point out the affective aspects of defining job satisfaction. They argue that job satisfaction is a consequence of the employee's evaluation of the fulfilment of his unique needs. This assumption is supported by Arora (2000) and Sinha and Agrawal (1971).

Finally, Hom and Kinicki (2001) argue that job satisfaction consists of a positive affective response which is subjective in nature. This evaluation is based on how employees view themselves in the work context as well as what they want and value as important.

However, it is not always a simple process to distinguish between perception and affect. A well-known organisational psychologist, Locke (1976, p.1300), defines job satisfaction as the 'pleasurable emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values'. One can therefore argue from Locke's definition that job satisfaction depends on an employee's own set of values, assumptions and perceptions regarding his or her job. To contribute to the challenge and confusion of distinguishing between perception and affect, Schultz and Schultz (1998) note that job satisfaction is not only a concept encompassing both negative and positive feelings, but that these perceptions are linked to the personal characteristics of the individual as well. Luthans (1998) is consequently of opinion that there are three significant variables associated with job satisfaction: firstly, the emotional response to a job situation; secondly, how well outcomes are met or exceed the employee's expectations; and finally, the dimension which refers to a set of attitudes that combined constitute job satisfaction.

It is clear that when trying to define job satisfaction, the focus will inevitably turn to the meaning of work. Tuch and Martin (1991) point out that work has different meanings for different people. It is then clear that workers' job satisfaction will vary according to their unique set of values, needs and expectations regarding their jobs. Furthermore, Johnson and Johnson (2000, p.540) state that job satisfaction is 'an employee's response to working conditions and that these responses are shaped by individualised interpretations of differences in work conditions'. Fogarty (1994) states that worker accomplishments and the level of enjoyment in the work environment all contribute to levels of job satisfaction. With reference to work attitudes, Wilson and Rosenfeld (1990) are of the opinion that there is a correlation between high levels of satisfaction and positive work attitudes. However, Theron (1999) argues that job satisfaction could be defined as a more holistic overview of one's perception of satisfaction of work. The assumption can be made that employees could be satisfied with some aspects of work and similarly, dissatisfied with other components of the job. A general evaluation of their perception of their work situation will then result in their level of job satisfaction.

Another important aspect of job satisfaction is also the workers' feelings about their lives in general. Judge and Watanabe (1993) argue that measuring instruments such as the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) fail to incorporate the influence and impact of factors such as identity, culture and workers' general attitudes towards life. Also, it has been found that there is a positive correlation between life and job satisfaction that is similar in importance (Judge & Watanabe, 1993). According to Krossa (1996), the influence of satisfaction with life on job satisfaction is more severe than the

impact of job satisfaction on life satisfaction for both the short and long term. Interestingly, from a hierarchical perspective, employees higher up in the organisation seem to have higher levels of job satisfaction in comparison with those lower down in the occupational hierarchy (Friedlander, 1965; Ghiselli & Brown, 1955; Morse, 1953). The possible reasons and explanations of this phenomenon are discussed later in the investigation.

Notably important to the current investigation, it is fundamental to view social, psychological and cultural factors as role players in job satisfaction which could inevitably influence attitudes and perceptions of employees (Rubaii-Barett & Beck, 1993). It can then be argued that if job satisfaction is the result of above-mentioned factors, certain cultural or ethnic groups are predisposed to respond differently to their experiences in the work environment. Krossa (1996) is of opinion that these proposed differences may last even after periods of socialisation with other cultures and groups.

There is, however, criticisms regarding efforts to define job satisfaction. Harpaz (1983) is of opinion that the term job satisfaction has been widely used in the literature, but that it still remains a vaguely defined concept. In many cases, researchers and writers define job satisfaction based on their own perception and understanding, and very often, it does not correspond with others' viewpoints. Also, the meaning of terms used change from article to article, contributing to the challenge and vagueness of the concept. Currently, employees can be analysed based on different aspects of job satisfaction, making the topic broad and difficult to narrow down (Harpaz, 1983). Another criticism in the study of job satisfaction is to which extent the data obtained are comparable. Argyle (1987) is of opinion that people's job perceptions and their comparison to other people's jobs will be relative to previous experiences. It is also noted that there is limited research focusing on job satisfaction differences in different cultural groups which will further contribute to the complexity and challenge in studying job satisfaction (Oshagbemi, 2003).

Despite criticisms about apparent weaknesses in the literature, it is clear that high levels of job satisfaction can only benefit any organisation. Srivastava (2005) points out that job satisfaction will benefit both employees and the organisation if the organisation is prepared to make changes in order to produce positive employee attitudes. Moreover, Brayfield and Crockett (1955) suggested that by having an organisation with favourable employee attitudes, some aspects such as high quality of employees attracted to the organisation, improved selection procedures, appropriate employment of employees, pleasant labour management relations and excellence in overall job performance can be gained.

However, if organisations choose to ignore the importance of job satisfaction, low levels of productivity, high turnover and absenteeism could be challenges to overcome (Cohrs, Abele & Dette, 2006; Harpaz, 1983). Furthermore, the assumption can be made that people seek pleasure and satisfaction – not only on a personal level, but also from a professional level. However, if an employee does not experience job satisfaction, it can lead to frustration which can produce unacceptable reactions such as aggression, defensive behaviour and withdrawal (Harpaz, 1983). Wexley and Yukl (1977) are of the opinion that frustration experienced by employees can result in displeasure, and possible disputes and arguments between employees. Clearly this will not only have a negative impact on the employees, but also on the organisation as a whole. It is therefore evident that low levels of job satisfaction can have an impact not only on physical, but also mental health (Locke, 1976). This assumption is supported by Seashore (1975) who argues that employees will try to escape the unpleasantness of work and that can result in psychological withdrawal. Examples of the influence on physical health will include high risks of heart disease, abnormal blood pressure, cholesterol and so forth (Harpaz, 1983). Even more importantly, not only will dissatisfaction lead to a negative impact on mental or physical health, but it can also influence the general life satisfaction of the employee. Rice, Near and Hunt (1980) argue that what happens at work still has an influence of the private lives of employees – even if they do not view this as significant or as a priority.

With regards to current trends in the investigation into job satisfaction, some first world countries have found a decrease in overall levels of job satisfaction in recent years due to globalisation. Such trends could lead to higher levels of competition and expectations which could impact negatively on areas such as job security and job stress (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1999). Another reason could be that more intrinsically satisfied workers leave the labour force and is replaced by less intrinsically satisfied workers (Jürges, 2003).

Due to current trends in job satisfaction, the impact of globalisation and unique needs of employees, Kalleberg (1977) rightly mentions that one needs to take into consideration the possibility of a change of factors contributing to job satisfaction and therefore a longitudinal approach towards understanding the phenomena is required.

It is therefore clear that, as an area of research and study, the focus on job satisfaction is not a passing craze. From a human resource perspective, for example, Gottfredson (1996) states that job satisfaction is one of the five main career counselling outcomes. The latter, as well as performance, persistence, identity and economic stability, are the goals for individuals seeking help. As mentioned before, studies have also pointed out that job



dissatisfaction is related to diseases such as the risk for heart disease, depression, hypertension and a high absenteeism and turnover rate (Perry, 1992). Hence, employee job satisfaction fails to solely be a social or ethical issue, but is associated with economic considerations as well (Krossa, 1996).

With regards to the current investigation, job satisfaction was defined as a combination of cognitive and affective responses to the work environment. The main aim of the study was to investigate the cultural differences in perceptions with regards to determinants of job satisfaction. It was interesting to note whether socialisation in a more eurocentric environment influenced the determinants and perceptions regarding job satisfaction from an African perspective.

## **2.2 THEORIES AND MODELS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Since humans are holistic creatures, various variables, such as cognition, emotions, environmental factors and socio-economic status, would have an influence on the way we act and react in certain situations. Based on its definition, the same viewpoint could be applied to job satisfaction since various variables could have an impact on the subjective experience. Job satisfaction is a diverse and complex phenomenon and various theories should be proposed and assessed in order to try and explain the richness of these subjective experiences. Consequently, Schultz and Schultz (1998) argue that theories of job satisfaction consist of overlapping concepts focusing on motivation, as well as emotional and informational concepts. Therefore, some prominent theories are employed in the discussion to describe the phenomenon of job satisfaction. These proposed theories are by no means complete, and one could argue that there are possibly other relevant aspects that could also apply to job satisfaction.

Steers, Mowday and Shapiro (2004) give a short overview of the development of theories related to job satisfaction. According to these researchers, organisational managers as early as the 1930s started to consider the important role of social impact on work interaction. As a result, by the 1950s, various new models of work motivation had been presented and established. These models are referred to as the content theories and include work from for example Maslow (1954). Later in the 1960s, Herzberg (1966) was interested in how the nature of work as well as specific activities could influence one's work success. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953), on the other hand, emphasised the role of motives that could impact on the emotional states of workers.

Beginning in the 1960s, the focus shifted to process theories. Researchers were more interested in identifying the factors associated with motivation and the cognitive processes involved in job satisfaction. Examples of well-known theories during this time period are the work of Vroom (1964) and Adams (1963) (Steers et al., 2004).

The process theories are viewed as a group of cognitive motivational theories that aim to understand the processes of thought individuals employ in order to decide how to act in the work environment. A well-known cognitive theory is the expectancy-valence theory. In the late 1960s focus was placed on goal-setting where emphasis was placed on the importance and difficulty of goal specificity, difficulty and commitment which have an impact on the achievement of work-related tasks. The period also highlighted the importance of social cognition and the role of self-efficacy as highlighted by researchers such as Bandura (1977). According to Bandura (1977), it is argued that an individual's level of self-efficacy is essential in determining specific actions. This viewpoint is associated with the social cognitive theory (Steers et al., 2004).

The 1980s witnessed further conceptualisation and elaboration on existing work-related theories and frameworks. However, very few articles in the 1990s focused on the theoretical development of motivation. More recent proposals include topics such as the development of meta-theories on work motivation, the role of time factors in influencing goal-setting processes and the life-span and adult development theories to assist in the awareness and impact of aging in workplace motivational factors (Steers et al., 2004).

Balgobind (2002) emphasises the fact that when trying to understand and explain job satisfaction by means of either process or content theories, one needs to remember the change in values and consequently changing perceptions of individuals that will follow. Therefore, job satisfaction is an ever evolving and changing field, trying to match the employee's values, needs, perceptions and expectations to the current job.

### **2.2.1 Job satisfaction and motivation**

It is evident from the literature that there are similarities between explanations of job satisfaction and explanations of motivation. As a result, theories of job satisfaction tend to overlap with theories of motivation (Thierry, 1998). Roos and Van Eeden (2008) conclude that examples of such theories are comparison-process theory, instrumentality theory (linked with Vroom's theory), social influence theory, the two-factor theory and also the theory proposed by Adams.

However, to understand the relevance of the following models of job satisfaction, it is necessary to investigate this relationship closer. As already mentioned, job satisfaction is seen as the extent to which an individual enjoys his or her job. Motivation, however, highlights and explains the driving forces behind certain aspects of a job. In other words, job satisfaction seeks to find out 'what is', while motivation is interested in the 'why' of organisational behaviour (Bowen, Cattell, Michell & Distiller, 2008). Furthermore, according to Gilbert and Walker (2001) and Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler and Weick (1970), motivation theories can be divided into process and content theories. Process theories emphasise and investigate how motivation occurs while the content theories focus on what motivates workers. These categories are also relevant to models of job satisfaction since content theories are interested in the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and an identification of the employee's needs, whereas process theories highlight the cognitive process involved in evaluating job satisfaction (Baron, Henly, McGibbon & McCarthy, 2002). According to Harpaz (1983), content theories refer to variables that create, influence, maintain and extinguish behaviour. On the other hand, process theories' main aim is to try and explain how behaviour is created, influenced, maintained and extinguished.

Due to the close link, it is a challenge to separate motivation from job satisfaction models and theories (McCormick & Tiffin, 1974). Harpaz (1983) supports this by mentioning that throughout the literature, certain theories are described and applied as theories of motivation, whereas in other cases, it has been highlighted as theories of job satisfaction. Contrary to this, Brayfield (1960) points out that motivation and satisfaction are not similar since there are theoretical and practical variations between the two aspects. The possible analysis of the processes applied in the research on job satisfaction and work motivation, however, could be used to explain the overlapping of these constructs (Wernimont, Toren & Kapell, 1970). Therefore, it is argued that there is compelling correspondence between these two constructs. In order to try and explain the correspondence, Hackman and Oldham (1980) state that employees will experience higher levels of job satisfaction and a sense of success when their jobs have motivational characteristics. This will then inevitably fulfil employees' higher order self-actualisation needs. This notion is supported by Wofford (1971) and Harpaz (1983) who are of opinion that although there is no clear proof that job satisfaction and motivation are positively related, it is clear that they are affected by similar factors.

In the discussion of the models of job satisfaction regular reference is made to the role of motivation when assessing job satisfaction.

### **2.2.2 Content theories of job satisfaction**

The main assumption of content theories is that individuals have a uniform set of needs (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). Hence, these theories then try to establish those determinants that can contribute to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the work environment (Staples & Higgins, 1998). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), the 1950s introduced an era of beliefs that human motivation is not only the product of specific drives, but that innate psychological needs also contribute to an individual's motivational levels.

Theoretically the determinants of job satisfaction can be divided into situational, dispositional and interactionist paradigms (Cohrs et al., 2006). Based on the situational approach, characteristics of the job have an influence on job satisfaction and therefore the assumption can be made that more satisfying or favourable job characteristics will lead to an increase in job satisfaction. Dispositional approaches argue that job satisfaction is determined by the unique personality attributes of the employee and therefore some workers will have higher levels of job satisfaction than others. Finally, the interactionist approach believes that an interaction of both situational and dispositional approaches is needed in order to understand job satisfaction (Cohrs et al., 2006).

The main assumption of the need theory is that employees frequently compare the current status of their needs with the level of need fulfilment that they desire from their jobs. When needs are not fulfilled, an unpleasant state results and therefore employees are not able to experience job satisfaction. Different theorists have highlighted several specific needs which contribute to motivation at work (Statt, 2004).

Prominent theories include the role of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, the role of intrinsic and extrinsic determinants of job satisfaction as highlighted by Herzberg (1959) and also the need for achievement as illustrated by McClelland's theory (1985). One can rightly argue that other theories need to be considered such as Murray (1938) who focuses on the role of personality, Deci and Ryan (1985) who also refer to intrinsic and extrinsic needs and Nordenfelt (1993) who argues that needs are not necessarily only in a hierarchy, but that the importance of these needs to each individual needs to be investigated.

### 2.2.2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) is of the opinion that humans have an intrinsic need pushing them on toward self-actualisation (fulfilment) and personal superiority. In order for these needs to be achieved, the lower-level needs must be satisfied first. Consequently it is argued that if a person is satisfied at one level, he or she will look for satisfaction at a higher level.

Hence, if the lower-order needs have to be satisfied first, this leads to an emphasis on the physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, escape from pain and sex. According to Maslow's theory these experiences are referred to as deficiency needs, that is, in all such cases, we experience a lack and want to address such a need. However, release from pain, hunger and tension does not necessarily explain all that is important to us. We might search for things for their own sake – a type of positive goal. In order to understand what is essentially a human phenomenon, we must concede that motives go further than the first level deficiency needs (Gleitman, 1994).

Therefore, although we busy ourselves with our need to survive (D-motives), we also value needs that are of intrinsic significance to us (B-motives) – in other words, self-actualisation. This includes for example the need to deepen an understanding about oneself or the world, to develop admired skills or to accomplish certain personal ambitions (Gross, 1996).

Therefore, Maslow suggests a hierarchy of needs where the lower-order-physiological needs are first, then safety needs, the need for attachment and love, and the desire for esteem at the higher level. The final level is the aspiration to realise one's full potential (Gleitman, 1994).

The following is a summary of Maslow's needs hierarchy:

- Physiological needs which are linked to basic biological functions such as hunger, thirst and sex.
- Safety needs which focus on protecting the individual from physical and psychological damage.
- Social / Love needs focus on other people, social acceptance and the need to receive and give love.
- Esteem needs focus on the individual's concerns to be viewed as a person of worth who is competent and able.

- Self-actualisation needs are the needs to realise one's full potential, and to grow into the 'self' one is able to become (Srivastava, 2005).

Therefore, according to Gross (1996), the hierarchical character of Maslow's theory is an effort to emphasise the following: lower order needs need to be fulfilled before attention can be paid to higher order needs and higher order needs are associated with evolutionary development in later stages – in other words, associated with the development of the human race (i.e. self-actualisation). Gross (1996) is of the opinion that higher order needs are much more related to life experiences as opposed to the lower order needs which are clearly linked to more 'biological' demands.

Finally, according to Maslow, those needs which are mainly unsatisfied tend to create strain within individuals and this will result in an attempt to restore their internal equilibrium. When a need has been satisfied, it loses its efficacy. Also, Maslow argues that these needs are common across different cultures and ethnic groups (Srivastava, 2005). Maslow (1943) is, however, of the opinion that the higher up the hierarchy we move, the more demanding it becomes to achieve that need. Gross (1996) supports this by referring to the fact that many goals are isolated and long term and can usually only be achieved by a step-by-step approach. Individuals clearly will also differ in their ability to achieve these set out goals (Gross, 1996).

When evaluating the impact of Maslow's theory, support is found from Steers and Porter (1987) who claim that the needs individuals pursue are universal across various groups and populations and therefore could explain the motivational levels of employees appropriately. This viewpoint is supported by Asad and Dainty (2005) who argue that Maslow's theory is considered as very significant in explaining what motivates workers and it is consequently applied to various research studies. Even though Brenner, Carmack and Weinstein (1971) found philosophical and methodological weaknesses associated with Maslow's theory, Wahba and Bridwell (1976) have found proof for Maslow's assumption that there is a link between the strength of the need and the likeliness of the individual attempting to satisfy it.

Wahba and Bridwell (1976) did, however, find significant flaws in Maslow's theory such as that the needs did not form a unity as expected, the theory did not highlight or indicate when a specific need would become more significant, and there was no clear correlation between needs and behaviour. In addition, it was also argued that the needs were not described in sufficient detail and precision and one of the main points of criticism was the physiological assumptions made by the theory. The question was rightly asked whether individuals are

only able to be driven by physiological needs whilst simultaneously ignoring the potential impact of cognitive aspects.

Also, Schultz and Schultz (1998) and Bass and Barrett (1981), claim that Maslow's theory has received limited empirical support and has been criticised for the lack of scientific validity and appropriateness. It is furthermore argued that the complexity of the model contributes to the difficulty of testing it empirically. Also from a qualitative perspective, no indication of the validity of the model was found. Muchinsky (2000) argues very strongly that Maslow's needs hierarchy is much more an abstract statement about mankind than an empirical theory of human needs.

It is argued that Maslow's hierarchy is highly applicable to the current investigation since it can be linked to various factors associated with motivation and job satisfaction. This includes aspects such as safety needs which are associated with monetary remuneration, social needs where supervisors and colleagues play an important role, opportunities for promotion and advancement, and finally, the role of the work itself.

Also, according to the theory, it is predicted that as individuals gradually move up the managerial hierarchy, they will expect more from the organisation and will increasingly focus on higher order needs. According to Muchinsky (2000), managers on all levels of organisations should then be treated differently depending on their individual motivation and needs with regards to the organisation. When self-actualisation has been experienced and satisfied, it is a consistent demand which could consequently lead to more satisfaction in the work environment. This was also expected in the current investigation since all participants have moved to at least middle level management, and, as suggested by Maslow, will start to focus more on higher order needs than previously in lower levels of the organisational hierarchy.

It was expected that all the above mentioned factors would manifest in the current investigation and it was therefore argued that Maslow's hierarchy could contribute to the understanding of participants' responses. For instance, if they perceive their pay and work security as undesirable, they will need to take action to improve the working conditions. It was argued, however, that since middle level managers were participating in the study, it was unlikely that remuneration and a lack of job security would necessarily be one of the main factors of dissatisfaction regarding their jobs.

Another point of interest was their satisfaction with their supervisor and other colleagues in the work environment. The role of the supervisor is of particular importance since it is expected of middle level managers to not only communicate strategic decisions to subordinates, but also to accept it, even if they do not agree with it fully. Finally, the role and impact of the task at hand are also important. The question was asked whether the manager is enjoying his or her work and what is expected of them. It was also interesting to see whether the supervisor and organisation as a whole created opportunities for growth, development and self-actualisation.

To conclude, from a cultural perspective, it had to be established whether African middle level managers are interested in the higher order needs in the hierarchy, or if the lower order needs such as pay and compensation are pointed at as the most influential dimensions of job satisfaction.

#### 2.2.2.2 Herzberg's Needs Theory

Herzberg and his colleagues developed the Two-Factor Theory whereby they conclude that aspects of the work itself (motivators) and good working conditions (hygiene factors) have an effect on job satisfaction (Arora, 2000). Examples of motivators or job factors include the work itself, responsibility, opportunities for growth and advancement and recognition (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). These motivators have a positive impact on the experience of job satisfaction, often resulting in an increase in one's total productivity. By increasing these motivators, employees will be satisfied and content, but a decrease does not necessarily have a significant effect on their overall satisfaction level. Herzberg maintains that the impact and strength of factors are not entirely due to the type of factor, but is also influenced by individual differences such as the personality of the employee (Srivastava, 2005).

As mentioned, according to Herzberg, the second group is called hygiene factors (extra-job factors). Examples of these hygiene factors include salary, interpersonal relations with emphasis on the supervisor, subordinates and peers, supervision (technical), company policy and administration, working conditions, factors in personal life, status and job security (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Adequate hygiene levels hinder dissatisfaction. However, they do not enhance job satisfaction. In order to accomplish job satisfaction, management must focus on job content (i.e. motivators). Perceptions of recognition, achievement and advancement should be encouraged by interesting and intellectually stimulating jobs. This



implies that Herzberg's theory is essentially an extension of Maslow's suggestion of self-actualisation with reference to the particular problem of job motivation (Arora, 2000).

Herzberg's theory is, however, controversial and various aspects of it have been criticised. Brenner et al. (1971), for example, challenge Herzberg's model due to the assumption that individuals receive both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction from motivation and hygiene factors. Furthermore, Schneider and Locke (1971) argue that Herzberg's theory is biased and displays weaknesses in terms of its classification systems. Moreover, Gaziel (1986) states that there is not reliable support for the theory since Herzberg himself did not consistently explain his own theory. According to King (1970), there are more than four different versions from the theorist himself (as cited in Gaziel, 1986).

Some of the main reasons why researchers did not find consistent support for Herzberg's theory include arguments that too much emphasis is placed on the method, sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction seem to coincide and it seems as if the theory tends to ignore the impact of individual differences (Gaziel, 1986). From an empirical perspective, it has also been mentioned that Herzberg did not operationalise the hygiene factors and motivators clearly enough. Since the original research was not focused on the current job of the participant at that time, it complicates aspects such as control and inferences which are necessities in the scientific research process (House & Wigdor, 1967). Ben-Porat (1981) and Harpaz (1983) argue that Herzberg's theory is one of the most well-known (or rather infamous) theories in the field of industrial psychology. The latter opinion is not only because of the contribution to the study of human behaviour, but also due to its methodological limitations.

Locke (1976) is of opinion that Herzberg's theory has achieved noticeable importance in analysing motivation in order to understand job satisfaction better. In addition, Steers and Porter (1987) conclude that although there is a long list of criticisms on Herzberg's theory, it has an important impact on discussions into processes and research into motivation and job satisfaction that has been neglected during the 1950s. Consequently, it has also stimulated research in related fields (Harpaz, 1983). This viewpoint is furthermore supported by Griffin (1993) who claims that Herzberg's theory played an important role in having an impact on specifically managers whilst raising their awareness of the importance of motivation in the workplace.

Since the proposed investigation was qualitative of nature, one could argue that the empirical criticisms of Herzberg's theory were in a sense non-applicable. However, the

researcher remained aware of the point made by House and Wigdor (1967) that the motivators and hygiene factors were not specifically related to the participant's current job. Therefore, great care was taken into acknowledging the impact of job satisfaction specifically relevant to the current job experiences of the participants.

The current investigation aimed to investigate the importance of motivators such as the work itself and opportunities for promotion and advancement, and hygiene factors such as monetary remuneration, supervisor abilities and co-workers and support received from colleagues. The probing technique was used to clarify exactly which aspects were regarded as important to the interviewees in their current work environment.

It was anticipated that although aspects such as work circumstances, personal life factors and job security were not explicitly mentioned in the interview questions, participants would mention some of these aspects either implicitly or explicitly.

#### 2.2.2.3 McClelland's Theory of Needs

McClelland and his associates formulated their theory of motivation on the assumption that motives develop from alterations in emotional levels. They concluded that motives should be classified in terms of the types of individual hopes, and secondly in terms of the action associated with these motives (Srivastava, 2005).

Consequently McClelland et al. (1953) refer to the concept of achievement motivation in terms of a so-called achievement goal. Achievement goals are associated with successful competition and outstanding outcomes. In many cases individuals will not be successful in competitions, but, McClelland et al. (1953) argue that the experience of an excellent standard still encourages a perception that a goal has been achieved.

This need for achievement is labelled by McClelland as n Ach. The tendency which is called n Ach is set and fixed in mankind. This need for achievement highlights a person's need to do well. It therefore stresses the importance for an individual to accomplish something and to do his best in order to produce an outstanding performance (Srivastava, 2005). McClelland (1985) argues that those with a high need for achievement (n Ach) are associated with tasks where there are reasonable chances for success. Individuals are, however, more interested in the level of feedback they receive on their actions or performance. Such feedback will provide individuals with the opportunity to assess and

effectively adjust their actions in order to succeed in the future (Arora, 2000). McClelland (1961) also points out that in order to achieve, the individual must consider himself accountable for the outcome, and there must be unequivocal knowledge of results so that the individual has the ability to know when he has succeeded (Srivastava, 2005). Arora (2000) states that McClelland has also studied social differences in the need for achievement and highlighted how such variables could have an impact on key role players – especially in terms of economic development since managers and executives who associate themselves with achievement will also be interested in growth, development and so forth.

McClelland is of the opinion that people high on n Ach, will prefer situations with a moderate level of risk involved, where their own accountability is acknowledged and where they receive performance feedback (Statt, 2004). In addition, the three major characteristics of individuals who display a high need for achievement will be: a work environment where they have responsibility for solving work-related problems; an environment where they can take informed risks and have the ability to set reachable goals; and a work environment where they will receive continuous feedback and positive recognition for their progress and work well done (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

McClelland also focused on two other needs that are related to each other. The first is the need for affiliation (n Aff) and the second is called the need for power (n Pow). It is generally accepted that the need for achievement is associated with higher-order psychological needs. It is argued that the need for achievement is closely related to Maslow's self-esteem and self-actualisation needs. The need for affiliation is linked to Maslow's social needs whilst the need for power is in line with the safety needs (Statt, 2004).

Due to satisfaction in social and interpersonal activities and relationships, individuals develop a need for affiliation. Emphasis is placed on a clear need for strong interpersonal ties and to develop a close psychological relationship with somebody. With regards to the need for power, McClelland (1985) is of the opinion that it highlights an individual's desire to have an impact or influence on others. It has been found that individuals high in the need for power prefer competitive scenarios and being in control (Srivastava, 2005). McClelland (1961), however, emphasises that due to individual differences, these three needs may have different levels of importance for each person.

When assessing the impact of McClelland's theory, it is clear from the literature that, although not all studies support the theory, it still provides an acceptable explanation for the motivation of some employees (Schultz & Schultz, 1998). For example, Langan-Fox and

Roth (1995) found a positive correlation between achievement motivation of executives and the financial success of their organisations. A further study also found a significant positive correlation between the promotion of middle level managers and their need for achievement.

It is clear from McClelland's Needs Theory that one could safely assume that the majority of managers enjoy a work environment where they feel they have the opportunity to assume responsibility for a specific task and to solve consequent problems. It was of interest in the current investigation to establish whether the selected middle level managers all share this need for achievement in their workplace. According to Schultz and Schultz (1998), managers with a high level of need for achievement are receptive of new ideas and projects. Creativity and innovation are therefore priorities in their approach to their job and tasks at hand. Furthermore, the need for affiliation was investigated by considering for example the interview questions regarding the role of specifically colleagues in the work environment. Middle level managers who mention the importance of the support they receive from colleagues, displayed a need for affiliation, as highlighted by McClelland's theory.

Another aspect that was of interest was the need for power, as proposed by McClelland's theory. This refers to the need and desire to influence others and to have an impact on others' lives. Also, from an individual differences perspective, one needs to acknowledge factors such as personality, culture, environmental influences, level of aspiration and so forth before generalising these assumptions to all employees (Srivastava, 2005). This was also a factor that the researcher had to take into consideration when analysing the data.

#### 2.2.2.4 Conclusion

It is clear when studying the content theories of motivation that the main emphasis is placed on the individual needs of employees in the workplace. These theories include Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory and McClelland's Needs Theory. Many aspects of these theories could guide the current investigation. For instance, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be applied to perceptions of the work itself and whether the individual perceives his or her needs as being met in the current work environment. Monetary remuneration is explicitly mentioned in Herzberg's theory and could therefore be further investigated from a qualitative perspective. Opportunities for growth and advancement were investigated in the current study since it is explicitly mentioned in both Maslow and Herzberg's theories. It is furthermore also mentioned in McClelland's theory when highlighting individual's needs for power and achievement.

Finally, Herzberg mentions the role of both supervisor and co-worker in his Two Factor Theory. Potential references from interviewees regarding their need for support from co-workers or supervisors were associated with McClelland's need for affiliation.

It is therefore clear that, although not holistically, but rather partly, all three theories could possibly assist the researcher when analysing and discussing the themes that evolve from the semi-structured interviews. It is acknowledged that many of these content theories overlap in one way or another and therefore no specific variables could be pointed at per theory, but rather a more eclectic approach towards answering the research question was adopted. It remains of interest to identify the dimensions that are uniform, as proposed by the content theories, which contribute to the satisfaction, but importantly also the dissatisfaction of employees in the workplace.

### **2.2.3 Process theories of job satisfaction**

Process theories highlight the distinction in employees' needs and try to explain the cognitive processes and steps involved in establishing these differences (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). These theories therefore not only try to determine specific factors when studying job satisfaction, but also pay closer attention to the different cognitive processes involved in the employees when assessing and evaluating their job and work environment.

Various process theories were considered for this investigation. Hull's (1943) is most probably one of the earliest process theories that focused on habit as being the main motivator of behaviour. This theory originated in the behaviourist approach where the assumption is made that habit strength is the outcome of a stimulus-response link which has its origin in past reinforced experiences. The Work Adjustment Theory by Dawis, Lofquist and Weiss (1968) is another process theory that was considered. This theory is also based on behaviourist assumptions in claiming that the reinforcement ability of the work environment (i.e. rewards available from the job); the needs of the employee (i.e. status or acknowledgement); and the abilities of the employee will all contribute to the experience of job satisfaction. Lawler's (1973) Facet Satisfaction Model focuses on the interaction between job satisfaction and performance.

Due to the research aim to try and identify specific dimensions of job satisfaction, it was decided not to focus on the former behaviourist originated theories or to investigate the impact of performance on job satisfaction. A model that was considered is that of Adams that focuses on the perceptions of employees regarding the equity of what they put into their

jobs and what they receive out of it (Adams, 1963). Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory is another theoretical viewpoint reflected on due to its close links with Maslow's (1954) and Herzberg's (1959) content theories of job satisfaction. Finally, the Value Theory of Locke (1969) was taken into account due to the assumption that job beliefs are directly linked with job satisfaction and that one of the main aspects of the theory is the have-want discrepancy of a specific facet of job satisfaction.

### 2.2.3.1 Equity Theory of Adams

It is inevitable that employees will compare rewards with each other. The equity theory is mainly concerned with the process of motivation, and even more so, the cognitive factors involved in the way an individual deals with motivational forces (Statt, 2004).

The essential assumption of the equity theory is that an employee will observe the input and consequent rewards of co-workers and compare it then with his own efforts and perceived rewards. This evaluation can then result in a perception of equity or inequity (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). Possible consequences of inequity can be that employees will change their work efforts; try to change their job outcomes; alter their self-concept or perception; change their perceptions of others or ultimately, leave their job (Robbins, 2001).

Adams proposes a theory which is based on the principles of social exchange (i.e. trying to find some form of equity between inputs and outputs). As Srivastava (2005) points out, in this theory Adams attempts to explain the process of motivation by focusing on the cognitive processes associated with such behaviour. According to this theory, it is claimed that individuals make a conscious decision about the available behaviour alternatives and select those which are valued and satisfying.

Adams (1963) views the relationship between organisation and employee on the basis of an exchange. The inputs are seen as all the employee's efforts being invested into the job, (i.e. prior training, previous experience, effort put into the job and so forth). On the other hand, the outputs are seen as any aspect the employee believes he or she is getting out of the job situation such as rewards, status, building experience etcetera.

Consequently, the equity theory aims to explain an employee's assumption of fairness and justice in the work environment when comparing the ratios of inputs (such as qualifications and hours at work) with the outcomes (such as employment status and remuneration).

According to the theory we have no choice in attempting to equalise the inputs and outcomes in whatever way we experience and perceive equality (Statt, 2004). Within an organisation, equity is therefore present when employees perceive that the ratios of their inputs to their outcomes are compatible with the ratios of other employees. It assumes that employees' attitudes and actions are influenced by their appraisal of their work contributions (referred to as inputs) and the rewards they receive (referred to as outcomes). Reference comparisons may include for example oneself, colleagues or co-workers in the workplace or organisational policies and expectations. It is important to note that this theory emphasises the impact of an individual's perception regarding outcomes and inputs with no or little reference to actual inputs and outcomes (Arora, 2000). According to Srivastava (2005), the intensity of the motivation is positively correlated with the perceived level of equity.

Perceptions regarding equity can have a positive or negative impact on job satisfaction. Arora (2000, p.113) states the following in this regard: 'When one's own outcome/input ratio is believed to be greater than another's, the individual is theorised to experience a state of overpayment inequity, causing feelings of guilt. In contrast, when one's own outcome/input ratio is believed to be less than another's, the individual is theorised to experience a state of underpayment inequity, causing feelings of anger. When one's own outcome/input ratio is believed to match that of other persons, a state of equitable payment is said to exist, resulting in feeling of satisfaction.'

Some criticism of the theory comes from Harpaz (1983) who points out that most of the research on the equity theory focuses on remuneration as the main focal point. It is argued that other possible factors and the impact of the theory on the work situation has not been fully considered and acknowledged.

On the positive side, Korman, Greenhaus and Badin (1977) find that laboratory research supports the basic assumption of the equity theory (i.e. that equitable outcomes are more rewarding and satisfying than inequitable outcomes). Despite these obvious limitations regarding the focus on pay as an outcome, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) are of opinion that the theory highlights the factors associated with employees' attitudes towards remuneration and rewards. The equity theory is applicable to current economic situations since many employees are experiencing potential threats of downsizing and appointments to other departments. It could be argued that many of these changes have not been part of the original psychological contract and could therefore enhance the feeling of injustice as experienced in the work environment (Arnold, Robertson & Cooper, 1998).

From the current investigative perspective, the equity theory was applied by referring to monetary compensation and rewards received for work well done. Clearly it is an aspect that the majority of employees find of importance, and therefore it was included in the semi-structured interviews.

Since Adams argues that some form of social exchange needs to take place between inputs and outputs, the qualitative interviews also attempted to find out whether a perception has been created by employees that their inputs and received outputs are fair and equal in comparison with their supervisors and colleagues. The focus therefore was not only on monetary satisfaction, as tested by the majority of studies in this field (Muchinsky, 2000), but also to have a closer investigation into the perceptions regarding the impact of other employees in the organisation. Therefore, the theoretical framework of Adams' work was applied to not only the monetary aspects, but even more so, to perceptions regarding the competencies and recognition received by supervisors and colleagues. It was argued that the middle level manager has a closer relationship with his or her supervisor in comparison with for example entry level employees. Consequently, due to a perceived closer working relationship, managers will be more able to assess the abilities and impact of the supervisor on their own perception of the work environment.

In addition, the equity theory could possibly shed some light on employees' perceptions of equity, not only with regard to their work colleagues, but also spouses that are working in similar conditions. With the increase of dual-career couples, the husband-and-wife equity comparison could possibly have a negative impact on their intimate relationship and career (Griffin, 1993). The theory, in a sense, lends itself therefore to an exploration of potential gender differences when revealing perceptions and assumptions regarding equitable treatment in the workplace. Similarly, another point of interest was to establish whether cultural differences have an impact on participants' perceptions – especially due to the socio-historical heritage of South African employees.

#### 2.2.3.2 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theories focus mainly on the process of motivation and it tries to deal with the question of how people decide to act in certain ways. The essence of the expectancy theory is to try and establish the main motivator of behaviour and the reason why individuals will choose a specific behaviour to reach a goal (Harpaz, 1983). The most notable expectancy theory is associated with Vroom (Statt, 2004). His proposed theory is known as the VIE



theory (Statt, 2004). Vroom (1964) developed this motivational theory as an extension and elaboration of the main principles of Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1959) (Harpaz, 1983). Based on Vroom (1964), individuals will only act to achieve a goal when they believe that they are able to achieve it. Secondly, when choosing to act, individuals will favour their act based on the potential and likely outcomes of these actions (Harpaz, 1983).

*Valence* is defined as 'emotional orientations toward particular outcomes'. Based on Vroom's (1964, p.15) assumptions, he defines an outcome as 'positively valent when the person prefers attaining it to not attaining it' and 'an outcome has a valence of zero when the person is indifferent to attaining or not attaining it, and it is negatively valent when he prefers not attaining it to attaining it'. Discordance between valence (expected satisfaction associated with a particular outcome) and value (the actual satisfaction stemming from an outcome), is possible (Harpaz, 1983). From an organisational perspective, Srivastava (2005) argues that valence is associated with the intensity of an employee's initial choice for a specific outcome. For example, if an employee has a high need for recognition, such a construct will have high valence for the individual (Srivastava, 2005).

Vroom (1964) explains *expectancy* as a short-term belief about a specific expectation which is followed by a specific outcome (Harpaz, 1983). The span of expectancy can range from zero to one where zero expectancy implies that an individual's action will not result in a specific outcome. Contrary to this, if an expectancy level is one, an individual has a subjective belief that his action will result in an outcome. Expectancy is therefore viewed as an individual's assessment of the chance that effort will result in achievement. The level of self-efficacy and locus of control will contribute to an individual's belief about his or her own capabilities (Lee, 2007).

*Instrumentality* is a person's subjective appraisal of the likelihood that personal performance will lead to a consequential outcome. Lee (2007) argues that it is related to the individual's perception or anticipation that if certain actions take place, certain rewards will follow. Srivastava (2005) supports this notion by referring to instrumentality as the employee's perception that once the task has been completed, rewards are expected. The employee therefore makes a subjective assumption about the value the organisation places on his or her efforts.

As has been mentioned, Vroom's expectancy theory highlights the significance of motivation. His focus was on the reasons why individuals choose or select certain behaviours or actions (Lee, 2007). The essence of Vroom's theory with regards to satisfaction is that this

phenomenon is in an anticipated state (i.e. will the rewards experienced by the individual lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction). Vroom argues that the term valence is more applicable than satisfaction since the phenomenon is in an anticipated state, not an actual one (Harpaz, 1983).

The relationships can be shown in the form of a formula:

Motivation = Valence Expectancy Instrumentality

$$M = V \times E \times I$$

Motivation is the outcome of valence, expectancy and instrumentality. It suggests the effort associated with a desired outcome (Srivastava, 2005).

To sum up, Vroom (1964) is of opinion that workers will experience motivation if the following three criteria is met: behavioural valence outcomes must be significant, there must be a belief that the actions are needed for the particular valence outcome and finally, they must have faith in their ability to display the particular behaviour that is essential to succeed in the desired outcome (Lee, 2007).

Mitchell (1974) mentions that there are many research studies supporting the validity of this theory. There are, however, also some criticisms regarding Vroom's theory. Campbell and Pritchard (1976) for instance argue that there is not sufficient data to use this model as an advocate of human behaviour. Furthermore, Lawler and Suttle (1973) are of the opinion that there are clear problems in trying to test the whole model holistically. They argue that the model and its aspects have become so complex that it exceeds the measures that exist to test it by. Therefore, Campbell and Pritchard (1976) point out that researchers should attempt to study different parts of the model instead of developing a large project on the whole model.

In addition, Arnold, Robertson and Cooper (1998) suggest that behaviour is better predicted when adding the components instead of multiplying them. From an empirical perspective, it has also been found that self-report measures of V,I and E have often been poorly designed and developed.

From a qualitative perspective, the theory does not explain why employees value or don't value specific outcomes. In other words, no attention is paid to the particular needs of the

employees. It could therefore be argued that the theory is mainly interested in the process, but not really the content which is associated with motivation and satisfaction (Arnold et al., 1998).

In order to fully apply and understand the impact of Vroom's theory on participants' perceptions, the present study focused on the participants' emotional orientation towards expected outcomes. In other words, how did they view the outcomes personally and did the task at hand feel of high importance to them. Not only the emotional aspects were taken into consideration, but also cognitive belief systems about the potential outcomes as illustrated in the expectancy phase of the theory. Finally, the qualitative interview probed and investigated the impact and role of the subjective judgement of the participant with regards to their performance which leads to a specific outcome. The researcher was interested in finding out whether expectations are met, not only on an emotional, but also cognitive level and whether participants perceive their organisation, but even more so, their supervisor as the role player in encouraging them to put their best efforts into their work. It was argued, based on Vroom's theory, that if participants did experience especially instrumentality in their work environment, they would display high levels of motivation towards the task at hand and consequently also the work environment.

### 2.2.3.3 Locke's Value Theory

Factors such as the role of goal-setting and employee performance all contributed to the development of Locke's theory of job satisfaction. In part, his theory or explanation of job satisfaction is related to aspects of Herzberg's suggestions (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

Since Locke argues that job satisfaction is defined as the result of what one desires from a job and what one's perceptions are regarding what is being received from a job, the assumption can be made that job beliefs have a direct influence on job satisfaction (Illies & Judge, 2004). Therefore it is suggested that a direct link exists between what we think and how we feel about our jobs. It is clear that employees use both cognition and affect when evaluating their jobs and that one cannot ignore the importance of emotions in high-level cognitive processes (Judge & Larsen, 2001). Research studies support such a notion by arguing that employees will experience high levels of job satisfaction when a correlation exist with their personal work values (O'Brien & Dowling, 1980).

According to McFarlin, Coster, Rice and Cooper (1995), Locke's theory (1976) is based on two main aspects: firstly, the have-want discrepancy of one particular facet of a job and secondly, the relative importance of that particular facet. Facet importance refers to the importance and level of that facet in the employee's hierarchy of values. Another aspect of this theory is the range-affect-hypothesis which explains how the have-want discrepancies can influence job satisfaction. When facet importance is high, clearly workers will experience intense levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The contrary will also then be true if the facet is not rated as very important (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

Locke's (1976) viewpoint that job satisfaction is associated with the sum of satisfaction with separate aspects of the job is questioned. It is argued that job satisfaction is rather linked with the level of importance placed on each aspect of the job (Landy, 1989). It is therefore argued that a more accurate prediction of overall job satisfaction will be reached if the satisfaction of each element of the job is considered. It therefore means that if a certain aspect of a job is not perceived as very important, he or she will neither be satisfied or dissatisfied with it. The contrary is also true. If an individual places high value on certain aspects of the job, slight discrepancies associated with such elements can have an impact on overall levels of job satisfaction (Fourie, 2004). Baron and Greenberg (2003) similarly claim that the value of work-related outcomes should be determined in order to assess the impact and influence of such a determinant on job satisfaction. The more importance and emphasis an employee places on a specific determinant, the higher the difference in levels of job satisfaction when specific work-related changes are experienced.

Locke defines a value as a variable an employee would like to keep or gain (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Based on this definition, one must distinguish between needs and values. Locke is of the opinion that values are closely associated with goals. For example, both constructs have attributes such as content and intensity. Content is associated with what is important or valued whilst intensity refers to how much such a variable is of importance (Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

This theory also supports the idea that if too much importance is placed on a particular need, more dissatisfaction will occur. Consequently Locke's theory is viewed as complex and appears to focus specifically on each person (Maniram, 2007).

Locke's theory is criticised for its limited empirical evidence and support (Judge & Larsen, 2001). Furthermore, Hodson (1997) is of opinion that too little attention is paid to the underlying emotional factors influencing employees' perceptions regarding work.

Locke's Value Theory was expected to be useful in explaining individual differences with regards to dimensions of job satisfaction identified in the current investigation. It is clear from Locke's theory that the emphasis is placed on a specific facet – which is different for all participants concerned. The discrepancy in the have-want relationship of the identified facet indicates potential satisfaction or even dissatisfaction in the current work environment of the participant.

Participants were selected from a range of different types of organisations, such as education and finance. It was suggested that the value systems of participants would differ based on their organisational culture and the nature of the job at hand.

The methodology used was expected to contribute to the development of a unique set of values as shared by the participants during the interview process. The phenomenological, hermeneutic and ideographic nature of the research methodology guided the researcher in establishing and identifying these unique experiences of all participants involved in the investigation. Consequently, through the identification of evolving themes from the conversations, the researcher was able to clarify the importance and value placed on specific identified facets as discussed by the participants.

#### 2.2.3.4 Conclusion

When referring to the process theories in the current study, it was predicted that neither the Equity nor Expectancy Theory can sufficiently explain participants' attitudes towards the work itself. However, Adams' Equity Theory could be used as potential theoretical framework when investigating the role of the supervisor and co-worker in the participant's work environment. In both cases, it was argued by Adams that workers will strive to find a level of equity between their perceived inputs and outputs in their job. They will expect the same from people working with them in the organisation and perceived inequity, either on a personal or interpersonal level, will contribute to dissatisfaction.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory can be highly applicable to the investigation into participants' attitudes towards promotion and advancement since the facet of instrumentality clearly

emphasises the subjective judgements involved in the worker's frame of mind with regard to specific perceived outcomes.

Locke's Value Theory was of particular interest and importance in the current investigation because it was argued that the value placed on specific aspects of facets in the workplace, would be determined by individual differences. Potentially, from a qualitative perspective, this will be highly applicable in the analysis and discussion of the data.

The process theories highlight the impact of cognition on workers. It is clear that these theories highlight certain expectations and values placed on the work environment by the employee. In many cases, such expectations or perceptions are not met, and that inevitably leads to disillusionment or dissatisfaction. These proposed theories supported the investigation into identifying any job-related demands as perceived by middle level managers that could impact their job satisfaction.

#### **2.2.4 Social cognitive theory**

An alternative perspective on people's behaviour at work could be explained by means of the social cognitive theory. The emphasis of this theory is clearly placed on the social interaction of the employee as well as the cognitive processes associated with particular actions. This proposed theory developed from the work of Miller and Dollard with the Social Learning Theory in the early 1940s (Miller & Dollard, 1941).

Since the current investigation was exploratory of nature, it was argued that the researcher was interested not only in the social context in which the participant works, but even more so, the cognitive processes associated with developing specific perceptions regarding the work environment. Variables such as the historical and cultural dimensions of the employee will inevitably affect the perceptions developed at work. Therefore it is argued that the social context combined with the schemas developed, could help clarify many of the subjective experiences associated with work. As Bandura (1986) rightly points out, the social cognitive theory provides a contextual framework for predicting, altering and making sense of human behaviour and interaction.

#### 2.2.4.1 Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

The Social Cognitive Theory essentially argues that people learn by observing others and that the thought processes of those individuals will be central to their consequent actions. Although emphasis is placed on the social environment an individual grows up in, similarly, it is acknowledged that the individual person (i.e. cognition) also has an important role to play in specific behaviour (Stantrock, 2008).

The process of learning takes place when individuals not only observe others, but acknowledge the role and impact of the environment as well as the role of cognition. These three factors are reciprocal in nature and are therefore not static or independent from each other (Stantrock, 2008). According to Bandura, individuals learn both concrete and abstract skills through modelling (Bandura, 1986). It is furthermore argued that individuals do not merely respond to their environment, but that the environment will change due to the behaviour displayed. Individuals do, to an extent, manipulate the experiences they have. Bandura calls the interaction between the individual's behaviour and the environment reciprocal determinism (Rice, 2002). The fact that behaviour, however, changes from situation to situation may not imply that the behaviour is controlled or manipulated by different situations, but rather that the individual perceives the situations differently and therefore similar stimuli may result in differentiated responses from the same individuals (Jones, 1989).

The individual clearly also plays an active role in the decisions made before, during and after modelling. As Rice (2002) and Pajares (1996) point out, individuals will not merely model or imitate behaviour, but will also carefully consider what exactly to imitate, evaluate what they observe and weigh up the consequences of the selected behaviour.

Another aspect of the proposed theory is that of identification and self-efficacy. As mentioned previously, the theory highlights the interaction between social, environmental and cognitive variables. In order for learning to take place within the interaction of these three factors, it is argued it will most likely occur if there is a strong sense of identification between the observer and observed, as well as a high level of self-efficacy. It could be viewed as an internalised standard of expectancy towards oneself (Bandura, 1986). In other words, self-efficacy is defined as a set of beliefs determining motivation, action and affect (Bandura, 1989). The individual develops a set of beliefs that he or she is able to act effectively and exert a level of control over potentially influential events in their daily lives (Bandura, 1986). According to Cardwell and Flanagan (2004), self-efficacy will be

influenced by the successful performance of an action which will have a positive impact on the individual's level of self-efficacy.

This proposed theory is well-known and applied to many areas in psychology. Examples of the application can be seen in education, marketing and public health (Miller, 2005). A general criticism of the theory comes from Durkin (1995) and Rice (2002) who point out that, although aspects such as the observer's self-concept, self-monitoring and self-efficacy are taken into account when attempting to explain behaviour, dispositional factors such as the role and impact of personality are ignored or dismissed by the theorists. Although more emphasis has been placed on the cognitive aspects of the theory in recent years, it is still argued that very little emphasis is placed on the process of cognitive development (Grusec, 1992).

From a research perspective, the social context in which participants work and develop, as well as their perceptions regarding the work environment, were of importance in order to understand their identified sources of job satisfaction. As Bandura's theory rightly emphasises, a three way process takes place between the behaviour of a participant, the dynamics of the work environment as well as the participant's cognitive structures evaluating and perceiving the chosen behaviour.

The researcher in the present study was therefore interested in identifying whether participants do model the behaviour of supervisors and colleagues in their respective work environments. It was suggested that those who have close and respectful working relationships with specifically their supervisors, will inevitably model and imitate some of the positive traits as observed in the work environment. Similarly, it could be argued that participants who disagree with the work ethics or approaches of colleagues and supervisors, would consciously try to approach their work in a different matter.

Another aspect that was investigated was the level of perceived self-efficacy and the consequent actions displayed in the workplace. According to Bandura's theory, those participants with high levels of self-efficacy will share a belief system and attitude of challenges that could be overcome rather than a display of uncertainty regarding tasks at hand.



#### 2.2.4.2 Conclusion

The Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCT) is of particular use with reference to the majority of the main aspects highlighted in the semi-structured interviews. For example, perceptions regarding the work itself could be examined and explained by the cognitive aspect of the theory. Similarly, according to the SCT, individuals will model and imitate behaviour in their chosen environment, and since many employees will have a need to succeed and be successful, they could potentially model aspects of colleagues' or supervisors' behaviour in order to assist them in being promoted. This will, however, be closely linked with their perceived self-efficacy in order to proceed successfully with the planned behaviour.

The SCT did not only assist the researcher in understanding the participant's perceptions and cognitions about their supervisor's and co-workers' perceived competencies in the workplace, but also guided the investigation into probing and identifying possible job-related demands that could contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of managers based on their social cognitions.

### **2.3 DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

It is clear from the literature that researchers have different opinions regarding the dimensions of job satisfaction which could have an impact on workers in the workplace. For example, early research by Locke (1976) suggests that dimensions of job satisfaction are complex and inter-related with each other. According to the researcher, aspects such as recognition, benefits, working conditions, work and pay are the most common aspects to be considered. Mullins (1999) elaborated on these concepts by distinguishing between the cognitive, emotional and behavioural divisions linked to job satisfaction. This includes aspects such as intellectually stimulating work, satisfaction with rewards, acceptable working conditions and supportive co-workers and supervisors.

More recently, Hirschfield (2000) argues that these dimensions can be divided into intrinsic versus extrinsic factors. This implies that extrinsic factors are related to variables not associated with the job itself or work specific factors, but rather any other external factors that could impact job satisfaction. On the other hand, intrinsic factors are associated with job tasks itself such as autonomy, variety and so forth. To simplify, intrinsic job satisfaction is associated with the impact of the nature of job tasks while extrinsic job satisfaction is about

how workers feel about elements outside of the work situation which are not included in the specific task.

O'Malley (2000) builds on this distinction by including a cognitive component associated with perception of locus of control as well as self-actualisation variables such as opportunities for personal growth and advancement. Visser, Breed and Van Breda (1997) argue that in order to refer to employee satisfaction, one needs to acknowledge certain related and significant aspects as well. This includes the acknowledgement that employee satisfaction remains affective and that one should recognise the fact that these emotions or perceptions are unique to the individual. Also, attitudes and perceptions can change over time and situations, and are therefore not static.

One challenge and problem with the attempt to identify dimensions of job satisfaction is that research tends to measure only how satisfied the employee is in general with his or her work and do not mention how important these aspects are to the employee (Harpaz, 1983). This provides further support for a qualitative approach to job satisfaction in order to identify not only existing dimensions of job satisfaction, but even more so, to attempt to highlight any 'new dimension' to job satisfaction, and in addition, to clarify the importance of such dimensions to selected participants.

As indicated the process, content and social cognitive theories suggested various areas of investigation. It was argued that from a theoretical point of view certain dimensions were more important than others given the aim of the current investigation. To develop broader categories (that could thus serve as main questions in an interview guide) existing measures of job satisfaction were considered and the dimensions highlighted in the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendal & Hulin, 1969) were used. This includes the role of the following:

- The work itself where it refers to the degree to which the job offers for example prospects of personal growth and interesting tasks.
- Monetary rewards and the extent to which individuals perceive it as fair and equal in comparison with other workers.
- The extent of promotion opportunities and the future prospects of advancement and growth in the organisation.
- The perceived competencies of the supervisor to provide technical or job-related support as well as behavioural assistance when needed.

- The extent to which co-workers are technically experienced and supportive in the work environment (Smith, Kendal & Hulin, 1969).

All of these guided questions are theoretically supported by either content, process or social cognitive theories.

### **2.3.1 Job content**

Thurman (1977) identifies certain aspects of a so-called 'good job'. This includes variables such as task variety, growth and developmental opportunities and intellectual challenge. Davis, Levine and Taylor (1984) extended this by referring to job aspects such as challenging tasks and acceptable future career prospects and a variety in the daily routine at work.

The nature of the task and job content is evident in the literature. It is for instance shown by Nel, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2004) that employees prefer jobs that are challenging and interesting, and that will create possible opportunities for Maslow's higher order needs. (i.e. recognition and self-actualisation). Furthermore, it is claimed by King and Botha (1997) that levels of job satisfaction will increase if workers perceive their work-related tasks as interesting, intellectually challenging and contributing to personal skills development. It is, however, mentioned that such tasks should be viewed as meaningful in order to contribute to job satisfaction.

In addition, Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) and Weallens (2003) state that how the job is structured can influence one's perception regarding job satisfaction. If job content is intrinsically challenging for example, it could be linked to job satisfaction. It is suggested that job content should therefore be closely linked to employees' need for achievement (Herzberg, 1966).

Similarly, Johns (1992) points out that job satisfaction could be enhanced with intellectually more stimulating work. These types of jobs are normally associated with a high level of employee interaction as well as regular feedback on progress. However, one needs to be aware that the contrary could also be true - if the job is too challenging for the employee, it could lead to dissatisfaction, frustration or disillusionment (Dubinsky, 2004).

### **2.3.2 Supervisor**

Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens (2002) state that the role of the supervisor is to serve as mouthpiece of the organisation by being responsible for the communication of organisational goals, implementing strategic decisions and serving as a moderator between management and workers. As a result, supervisors are in regular contact with subordinates and therefore the relationship between the two parties has to be positive since the role of the supervisor is to motivate employees to perform to their highest ability (Ladebo, 2008).

This is supported by Griffin, Patterson and West (2001) who also suggest that supervisors play an important role in the work environment since they are responsible for disseminating information and organisational progress to subordinates. Such practices contribute to positive perceptions since managers or supervisors have the power to influence the level of uncertainty employees could experience towards their managers or other organisational policies and practices (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994).

Bateman and Organ (1983) found a positive correlation between certain aspects of job satisfaction and positive behaviours of leaders. It is argued that workers see their direct line manager as fundamental in obtaining knowledge about the organisation which in return will have an influence on the perceptions of the worker – either positive or negative. Yukl (1998) supports this viewpoint by highlighting that research indicates that workers who rate their job satisfaction as high, are usually also very satisfied with their supervisor.

Consequently, Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens (2002) found employees prefer working with supervisors or line managers who are fair and display a moderate temperament in the workplace. It has also been suggested that workers will experience higher levels of job satisfaction if they perceive their supervisors as skilled and earnest (Baron & Greenberg, 2003). A positive consequence of this is that, according to Vandenberghe, Bentein and Stinglhamber (2004), subordinates who enjoy a close working relationship with their supervisors or line managers, will reconsider before leaving the organisations since the supervisor played an intricate role in motivating them in their daily practice. Work satisfaction is also associated with positive characteristics in supervisors such as friendliness, support, recognition and showing an interest in the opinions of employees (Lordan, 1999).

### **2.3.3 Co-workers**

Acceptable and good working relations with colleagues and management have often been viewed as more significant than aspects such as the job itself when investigating job satisfaction.

Joiner and Bakalis (2006) suggest that workers who have established close interpersonal relationships and interaction with their co-workers have higher levels of organisational commitment than their counterparts not experiencing such support. According to Herzberg (1966), co-workers have the ability to create a work environment which is characterised by support and acceptance. Such an environment could be associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. Various researchers support Herzberg's (1966) assumptions. For instance, Hakim (1994) believes that co-workers could contribute to overall job satisfaction by being supportive, sharing their skills and competencies and by being approachable and pleasant. This is in line with McClelland (1985) who argues that individuals are motivated by their need for affiliation that is addressed by caring, friendly and approachable colleagues. Ellison (1997) also suggests that the perception of a supportive workplace could lead to positive associations about the organisation.

However, the contrary is also true. Interpersonal conflict, no teamwork and an unaccommodating and unfriendly workplace can negatively influence employee job satisfaction. It is therefore argued that management needs to be aware of such organisational characteristics when assessing employee perceptions regarding their job and work environment (Dubinsky, 2004).

### **2.3.4 Organisational climate**

Peterson (1995) warns that organisational climate is not psychologically easy to describe and to explain. Conflicting and ambiguous stimuli can contribute to a much more complicated picture. Therefore employees are seen as active interpreters of their organisational climate.

Field and Abelson (1982) are of the opinion that there is a correlation between organisational climate and levels of job satisfaction. It is argued that job satisfaction is a result of individual perceptions insofar the employee creates a psychological climate which corresponds with his or her current or potential overall levels of job satisfaction (James & Jones, 1974). The

researchers therefore highlight the role of cognition in the perception of job satisfaction within the organisational environment. Forehand and Gilmer (1964), on the other hand, focus on organisational variables by defining organisational climate as those aspects of an organisation that makes it unique in comparison with other organisations.

It is argued that employee commitment towards remaining in the organisation is related to the organisational climate (Hrebiniak, 1974). If employees perceive their work environment as caring and valuing their efforts and contributions, they tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than their co-workers not experiencing it (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli & Lynch, 1997). It is therefore clear that organisational climate does have an impact on job satisfaction and one could argue that it can consequently have an influence on turnover considerations of employees (Afolabi, 2005). However, although it is clear the negative perceptions regarding organisational climate have a causal effect on job satisfaction, there was no evident correlation found between organisational climate and negative job experiences such as job tension (Fisher, Milner & Chandraprakash, 2007).

### **2.3.5 Recognition**

Recognition is an aspect of work which shows the employee that his or her efforts at work have been noticed and appreciated. According to Yukl, (1998) it is a way of giving praise and to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of the employees. It has been argued that recognition practices are often ignored or neglected by managers in organisations.

Not surprisingly, in Gavin and Vinten's study (1983) it was found that feedback about a job well done is one of the facets that employees tend to be least satisfied with. This is clearly linked to the supervisor's inability to give regular feedback on job performance, accomplishments etcetera. According to Costley and Todd (1987) though, recognition could also come from other role players in the work context. The public, co-workers or colleagues, management or the organisation as a whole all provide feedback in a direct or indirect way. General practices associated with positive feedback could be verbal or written acknowledgement, bonuses or increase in pay (Lephoko, 2004). It is therefore not necessarily the responsibility of the supervisor alone.

This assumption has been highlighted by Anderson (1989) who points out that recognition received from any relevant person - not necessarily the supervisor - will contribute to the employee's perception of acknowledgement of a job well done.

Due to human nature, Lordan (1999) argues that all employees appreciate praise and regular positive feedback on successful task completion. Such practices increase employees' self-esteem and self-confidence in the work context which could contribute to increased levels of productivity in the organisation (Tappen, 1995).

### **2.3.6 Rewards, pay and promotion**

Yukl (1998) is of the opinion that various reward systems often positively impact overall levels of job satisfaction and motivation. However, these results were not found to be significant in all research. In addition, Joyce and Slocum (1982) state that although rewards can contribute to an employee's sense of achievement and recognition, extrinsic rewards do not compensate for the more intrinsic needs of the employee.

More contradicting findings were discovered in the literature. For example, Marsden and Richardson (1994) did not find a strong link between compensation systems and employees' job satisfaction. Mosley, Meggins and Pietri (1993), however, found that there is a close link between what rewards employees receive at their work and their level of job satisfaction. This assumption is also supported by Greenberg and Baron (1993) who argue that the expected rewards employees receive will contribute to their perception of job satisfaction. Chung (1977) therefore rightly mentions that inadequate reward systems could lead to dissatisfaction or disillusionment with the organisation.

There is, however, clear differences of opinion in the literature with regard to the importance and impact of pay on employees. Maniram (2007) is of the opinion that there is clear evidence that monetary rewards play a very important role in the job satisfaction of employees since employees have different and individual needs which can possibly be met by money (Arnold & Feldman, 1996). Clark (1996) furthermore points out that the role of pay in job satisfaction can be explained by means of various theories such as the discrepancy, equity and relative deprivation theories. These theories imply that it is not only their own level of pay that is significant to employees, but also the level of pay in relation to what their colleagues earn.

It is important, however, to note that employees' interest and need for money are closely linked to their security and physical needs as highlighted by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Locke, 1976). For other employees it is a tool to climb the social ladder and be

acknowledged by others. It is therefore clear that the issue of pay will have different meanings and different levels of importance to workers (Maniram, 2007).

The implication of self-worth of the employee is also very often related to the pay received. For example, if employees experience unfairness or that their salaries are not market related, this may cause feelings of being unappreciated and consequent dissatisfaction with their work (Chung, 1977).

The impact of pay on job satisfaction is, however, not always as clear-cut. In a study by McNeese-Smith (1999) it was suggested that salary and benefits had an impact on job satisfaction but in a British study done by Clark (1996) it was found that income is not significantly correlated with overall job satisfaction.

Kemp (1985) is of the opinion that a correlation exists between job satisfaction, motivation and opportunities for promotion. Lordan (1999) therefore argues that employees who experience and perceive promotional opportunities in the work environment as fair, will have higher levels of job satisfaction as opposed to those experiencing the opposite.

It is therefore not surprising that waiting for promotion is generally seen as the job variable that employees rate as most dissatisfying when evaluating their level of job satisfaction. It could be due to the fact that promotion is not a simplistic construct since it will inevitably influence other socially acceptable aspects such as higher pay, fringe benefits, more status, sense of achievement and new challenges (Thurman, 1977). Arnold and Feldman (1996) suggest that opportunities for promotion are more significant than job-related aspects such as achievement and recognition. It is argued that the latter will be a natural consequence of promotion.

It is generally acknowledged that workers will experience the need to develop, grow and progress in their job with new challenges that could contribute to increased levels of job satisfaction. The majority of workers would prefer the opportunity to have more work responsibility and to enjoy increased pay and status associated with such a promotion (King & Botha, 1997). However, according to Hoy and Miskel (1991), organisations need to be careful in promoting employees too quickly since it can possibly result in other loyal, but perhaps less innovative workers, experiencing feelings of dissatisfaction towards their jobs.

Smucker and Kent (2004) warn that if workers perceive themselves as ready and worthy of promotion, and they do not get it, it will inevitably lead to dissatisfaction.



### **2.3.7 Conclusion**

From the discussion it is clear that many dimensions could affect participants' perceptions regarding job satisfaction. Since a qualitative research methodology provided the framework for the current investigation, it was argued that individual differences will be acknowledged and elaborated upon when analysing the data. Consequently, some dimensions might be of value and importance to certain participants, but not necessarily to others. It is also of value to remind oneself that reference to certain dimensions in interviews does not implicitly highlight the value placed on those dimensions. When analysing the data, the researcher therefore needs to be careful when mentioning the role of specific dimensions by attempting to indicate the potential value placed on those referred to by the participants.

Finally, not all possible dimensions were discussed in the previous section. It was decided to use the theoretical framework of both content and process theories as guidelines in order to establish the most prominent dimensions as highlighted by the theories and models of job satisfaction.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides a general overview of various models and theories of job satisfaction which is closely linked with motivation. The two main schools of thought focus on content and process theories. All of the theories mentioned in the chapter show some relevance to the study and explanation of job satisfaction. Content theories attempt to focus mainly on human needs, and refer to the description of how work factors may satisfy these needs. Process theories, on the other hand, are concerned with needs but look beyond need satisfaction to the cognitive processes involved in assessing the job and work environment. It is, however, acknowledged that some of these theories give a rather simplistic overview of job satisfaction and that other theories are clearly more complex in their overview of job satisfaction. Furthermore, it is evident that some theories are conventional and well accepted within the academic society whereas others are more infamous for clear weaknesses in assumptions or methodologies.

The variety and different viewpoints illustrated in the models mentioned probably result from the fact that these theories or models were developed based on an assortment of different measuring instruments (Harpaz, 1983).

In order to understand the impact and relevance of these models and theories on the current investigation, it was imperative to also consider and highlight the different dimensions of job satisfaction as mentioned in literature. A general overview was given of the main situational, dispositional and interactionist dimensions of job satisfaction. This is of particular importance since an aim of the investigation was to investigate any possible links with so-called eurocentric dimensions of job satisfaction in comparison with afrocentric dimensions.

In Chapter 3 potential variables are investigated that could affect job satisfaction in greater depth. Due to the nature of the investigation and the potential impact of socio-economic and political factors in the workplace, it was decided to highlight the role of gender and culture in the employees' work environment in the next chapter. In addition, since the research study was interested in the impact of job satisfaction specifically on middle level management, this aspect receives more attention in Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES: GENDER, CULTURE AND MANAGERIAL LEVEL**

As seen in Chapter 2, various job determinants could have an impact on job satisfaction. This includes aspects such as the job itself, promotions, the role of supervisors and support received in the organisation. When investigating these aspects on a deeper level, it is clear that variables such as the gender of the employee, the culture they belong to as well as the hierarchical level they work at, could also influence the subjective experiences of job satisfaction. Clearly the above-mentioned factors are non-negotiable and therefore need special consideration. Consequently, this chapter highlights the impact, potential experiences and historical influences of being either male or female in modern South African organisations. It is evident in the chapter that the specific role demands as well as the socio-political circumstances inherited from the past, could all contribute significantly to perceptions regarding work. Moreover, the cultural framework from which employees act and perceive their communities and their world of work, are essential in developing a viewpoint not only about the organisation itself, but also about the determinants that could have an impact on job satisfaction. Finally, since the present study was specifically interested in the experiences of middle level managers, attention was paid not only to the general role and demands of managers, but also the general expectations related to middle level managers.

#### **3.1 GENDER DIFFERENCES ASSOCIATED WITH JOB SATISFACTION**

Due to the fact that more females are entering the workforce on a managerial level, it is of importance to management to identify any potential gender differences with regards to the levels of job satisfaction.

##### **3.1.1 Overall job satisfaction**

Alvesson and Billing (1997) argue that there are various reasons why one should pay attention to organisations in terms of gender. Organisations are seen as the backbone of society and by being part of it – either as employee, client or customer – a bidirectional relationship is created. Due to its role in the public domain as well as in the lives of employees, organisations have, in a sense, a moral responsibility in taking care of employees with regards to their experiences within the work situation and delivering the best possible product to the public.

However, it is evident that organisations largely neglected an important influence such as gender aspects up and to the 1980s (Hearn & Parkin, 1983). Mills (1988) points out that if gender was a topic of interest, it was normally viewed from a predominantly male perspective or where the opinions and behaviour of the majority of the workforce, which was males, were acknowledged. Consequently, this masculine dominance in both organisational life as well as in research and science had a profound impact on research questions being asked and answered (Martin, 1994). Many topics were never considered to be studied or questioned simply because it was not relevant to the male perspective. Also from a managerial point of view, it was assumed that the manager would be male, and therefore it supported the notion that research and organisational theory focused on the life and work of men (Martin, 1994).

With reference to job-design-job-satisfaction relationships in the workplace, it is argued that design decisions and options are often influenced by male dominated values and norms in the organisation. It is suggested that often policy makers prioritise aspects congruent with individual needs – and in many cases, needs associated with males, such as individualism and autonomy. These practices could possibly explain the level of job satisfaction for males, but not female satisfaction (Cullen, 1994). There is therefore ample reason to question theory and policies related to male samples since it may be unrealistic and inappropriate when applied to and associated with females (Fricko & Beehr, 1992).

Similar sentiments are relevant in science. Research into the world of work very often reflects unquestioned cultural assumptions and beliefs. Therefore, the traditional perception of leadership may be built upon a masculine, individualistic belief system (Lipman-Blumen, 1992). Collinson and Hearn (1996) support this notion by pointing out that the whole discipline of management is surrounded by a character of masculine bias.

It is clear, however, that the labour market has changed significantly in the past few decades. More females are employed in organisations and consequently the family roles have changed accordingly. In addition, there is also a belief that, from a South African perspective, the role of females is important due to the fact that they represent more than 50 per cent of the South African overall population. Female appointments in the workforce are also increasing on a daily basis (Firth-Cozens & West, 1991). Keightley (1995) rightly mentions that this shift in South African labour demographics can be viewed as one of the most significant changes in current labour markets (as cited in Firth-Cozens & West, 1991).

The literature illustrates a confusing picture regarding gender differences specifically focusing on job satisfaction. For example, Mottaz (1986) and Saner and Eyupoglu (2012) highlight the discrepancies in the literature with regards to levels of job satisfaction among both males and females. Some studies found females to be more satisfied, whereas others found the opposite. According to Saner and Eyupoglu (2012), the majority of recent research suggests that there are not really any clear differences in the levels of overall job satisfaction among the sexes.

### **3.1.2 Dimensions of job satisfaction**

The picture becomes more complicated when considering the various dimensions of job satisfaction in addition to the overall level. Chiu (1998) also mentions the inconsistencies in the literature with regards to gender differences and job satisfaction.

According to Quinn, Staines and McCollough (1974), various studies found females experiencing higher levels of job satisfaction, others indicated males with higher levels of job satisfaction and then there were studies that showed no gender differences with regards to job values and perceptions. For example, when referring in particular to job satisfaction, Long (2005) reports evidence for females being more satisfied with their jobs than males. It was noted that women reported higher levels of overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with work itself.

In order to investigate the assumption that females are happier at work than males, Long (2005) used an Australian database consisting of 13 696 participants. Participant responses were ranked on an eleven-point scale from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). Questions posed concentrated on participant perceptions regarding flexibility at work, compensation, working hours, opinions regarding job security and overall levels of job satisfaction. The findings suggest that significant differences exist between males and females with lower educational levels and lower skilled work. However, no significant differences were found between males and females with higher skills and educational qualifications. It was clear from the results that those with higher educational achievement tend to be less satisfied with their work, however, this was more evident in the case of higher educated females than males. Clark (1997) explains such differences by suggesting that higher educated females had higher expectancies of their work than males who are generally used to a male-dominated work environment.

Hakim (1991) explains the differences by claiming that there are females in the workplace who view their job and career as primarily significant and those who view work as secondary to their family roles and responsibilities. Those who view their careers as primarily important will normally invest more time and money in personal development, training and education. In general, those who prioritise family and children tend to have fewer educational qualifications and often prefer part-time work. Due to lower investment levels and fewer expectations in the latter group, it is expected that these females will experience higher levels of job satisfaction in comparison with their colleagues who invest much more into their careers. Based on this theory, gender differences will never be a phenomenon of the past – it will rather be related to the relative importance of a career for women.

Sloane and Williams (2000) also support the assumption that males and females value various features of their jobs differently which will inevitably result in different job outcomes that could potentially contribute to job satisfaction. Mason (1995) argues that females are more satisfied with jobs where they experience social interaction with others and work in a cooperative and supportive environment whereas males are more prone to more demanding and challenging jobs. According to Eagly (1987), female orientations will include aspects such as a need to be with others and helping others while male values will be characterised by self-development and the need to master tasks.

Murray and Atkinson (1981) analysed eight research studies and concluded that females are more inclined to value aspects such as social interaction whereas males place more value on extrinsic factors such as pay and advancement. Mortimer, Finch and Maruyama (1988) try to explain this phenomenon by hypothesising that females are more affected by their individual family needs and requirements in comparison with males. This argument is supported by Quinn, Staines and McCollough (1974) who found that females placed more emphasis on aspects such as travel time from work to home than men. It is argued that it is possibly because of female family responsibilities at home. Rightly one could ask whether the same assumption is still applicable in society today where in many cases, men are viewed as the primary caregivers. Another variable to consider comes from Martin and Hanson (1985) who argue that the sources of job satisfaction would be determined by whether the individual is the sole breadwinner of the family. They found for example that non-breadwinning females identified ease of access as an aspect of importance to them in comparison to those being the breadwinners.

A British study highlighted the relationship between three measures of job satisfaction and a range of job and individual characteristics. The researchers selected a random sample of

10 000 individuals in 5 500 British households by using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), collected in 1991 (Clark & Oswald, 1996). Clear differences with reference to gender, education, age, working hours and organisational size were found. It was found that males, employees in their thirties, those with higher educational levels, those working longer hours and those in larger organisations were less satisfied with their jobs than their counterparts. These findings might be discussed in terms of the level of employee job expectation and contribution to the labour force, as well as the comparisons of gender, age and education. It was found that the type of job also influenced results. For example, workers in larger organisations, working longer hours, union members and those with no promotional prospects are more likely to be dissatisfied in their work.

In another study it was found that males are more satisfied with pay than female employees whilst females place a higher premium on relationships with co-workers than their male counterparts (Tang & Talpade, 1999). In attempting to explain the gender differences, Groot and Van den Brink (1999) propose reasons such as balancing the needs of children and working hours as possible explanations for the differences in opinions.

Sloane and Williams (2000) conducted a study in the UK with 6 110 participants with a variety of employment circumstances. They found that females had a higher mean job satisfaction in seven facets excluding being able to use own initiative. For both males and females the most significant determinant of job satisfaction was the characteristics of the type of job. For men, job security and promotion were highlighted as more important, while women placed more emphasis on the importance of acceptable interpersonal relationships and working hours. From a traditional viewpoint, it is not surprising that males find especially job security a source of job satisfaction, if the traditional stereotypical viewpoint is supported that males are the sole breadwinners.

In a study by Bowen, Cattell and Distiller (2008), a web-based questionnaire survey was used for 146 quantity surveyors in South Africa. Sixteen per cent of the sample was female respondents. Findings suggest that, regardless of gender, the majority of quantity surveyors indicated satisfaction with their salaries. Similar results were found when the need of recognition by the supervisor was investigated. Again, no differences between genders were found. However, they did find gender differences with reference to the ability to not be on the work premises during established working hours (i.e. highlighting the need for flexible working hours). Similarly, females also indicated aspects such as maternity and paternity leave above legal minimum expectations as more important than men. Where there is male dominance in firms, nearly 50% of female participants indicated that promotional

opportunities to managerial level were obstructed by managers in the organisation. There are therefore clear gender differences in the perception of advancement opportunities.

It is clearly important to try and explain the gender differences in job satisfaction. Rosenbach, Dailey and Morgan (1979) attribute gender differences to females' subordinate position in society. Once again, these findings could be questioned in today's modern, gender equal society.

Gutek's (1988) explanation of gender differences focuses on the socialisation and structural paradigms where the differences in job satisfaction, for example, are ascribed to aspects that are related to gender due to previous separation of the sexes in organisations. Mason (1995) agrees by indicating that so-called multi-faceted opportunity structures in organisations will provide the positive outcomes of individualised values where these values are learnt by mostly males. On the other hand, opportunity structures often associated with females create focus on common outcomes such as positive relationships and interactions.

Paradoxical to this, the question remains why some investigations found that female job satisfaction levels are not lower than those of males since they have experienced much more inferiority in the world of work in the past. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that females will inevitably have lower job expectations than males since they compare themselves to females while males compare themselves to males (Chiu, 1998).

To conclude, there are clearly some contradicting findings in the literature since Johnson, McClure and Schneider (1999) investigated eleven different studies and concluded that there is no real empirical evidence to suggest any differences in the perception of job satisfaction between males and females.

Whether there are differences or not, there is still considerable occupational or career segregation between males and females, despite an increase in females – and even more married females – in the labour force (Sloane & Williams, 2000). This can possibly raise the question whether males and females desire and favour different aspects of a job. Sloane and Williams (2000) argue that males might favour jobs where overtime is more prominent – which will explain differences in pay between the sexes. Although females might be interested in opportunities for overtime, married females, especially those with children will find it more difficult to manage. Despite this argument, it is suggested that employees will attempt to maximise their advantages or rewards and that this will eventually result in equal outcomes (Sloane & Williams, 2000).



Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000) state that the level of job satisfaction of individuals are largely due to their own self-awareness and therefore it could be argued that when researchers investigate the determinants of job satisfaction, the focus and emphasis should be on more subjective variables such as perceptions about job security and pay and not necessarily on objective variables such as income and gender. The questions could rightly be asked whether such subjective determinants do play a role in job satisfaction since it remains perceptions during that particular point during an investigation (Dockery 2003).

Notably, Mason (1997) explains this confusion by referring to the fact that job satisfaction is a multi-faceted phenomenon and that research findings will differ based on the focus of the study. The author therefore warns researchers to be careful in generalising findings in this regard. From a cultural perspective, Schulze (2005) conducted a phenomenological investigation into the job satisfaction of black female academics at a South African distance learning institution. Respondents were selected using purposeful and snowball sampling with 10 participants associated with distance education and humanities taking part in the study. By using an interview, participants were asked how they felt about aspects such as promotions, co-workers, community service, teaching and research.

Intrinsically participants were rewarded by teaching, the opportunity to continually develop and the opportunity to specialise in a particular field. The majority of participants indicated a preference for teaching rather than research. Results with regards to community service were conflicting. Some participants knew exactly what it meant whilst others indicated no involvement or participation. Some participants did, however, suggest that community involvement contributed to their level of job satisfaction. With regards to administration and own management, a proportion of participants were 'overwhelmed' and 'did not feel in control' of the amount of administrative duties and expectations experienced in a distance educational organisation (Schulze, 2005).

The participants were dissatisfied with their remuneration and suggested that it did not reflect their effort at work. There were participants who mentioned that they experience job security – perhaps more than their white female or male colleagues. The promotion system has been associated with various weaknesses due to a lack of openness and opportunities for promotion. In general it was found that none of the respondents were dissatisfied with their work. Teaching, having access to an office and flexibility in working hours were highlighted as determinants participants were most satisfied with (Schulze, 2005).

### **3.1.3 Differences at managerial level**

When investigating gender differences in management, it is once again clear that different perceptions have been formed regarding the sources and experiences of job satisfaction. In the past, research indicated that many employers treated male and female supervisors and managers differently (Valentine, 2001). Studies done by Cann and Siegfried (1987) even found subordinates preferring male leaders to females (Valentine, 2001). Interestingly, Jeanquart-Barone and Sekaran (1994) also found that some female employees trust male supervisors more than female supervisors. With reference to subordinates, Cooper (1997) (as cited in Valentine, 2001) argues that it seems as if they also tend to suggest that female managers are the reason for unacceptable outcomes in the work environment. Consequently gender attitudes will then also have an impact on the assessment and preference for female managers and leadership (McGlashan, Wright & McCormick, 1995).

Also, the social impact within ambiguous situations will normally encourage stereotypical gender roles. It is therefore argued that at the managerial level in organisations, the type of job should rather be the criteria instead of the gender of the employee when policies are developed for managers in job areas such as motivation, job satisfaction, rewards and so forth. It is also stated that females in managerial positions should experience opportunities for achievement, advancement and responsibility in order for them to experience a challenging work environment. The result would be higher retention levels and a company benefiting from the skills and experience of these managerial females (Mason, 1995).

From a research perspective it will be interesting to note whether gender differences prevail between specifically managers. In a study by Johnson, McClure and Schneider (1999), no significant differences in job satisfaction was found on a 5% significance level. They did a study into the differences in job satisfaction between male and female transportation and logistics managers. They sent out surveys to 500 males and 500 females in the USA. The researchers received 155 male and 146 female responses back. They measured job satisfaction by using the Andrews and Withey Job Satisfaction Questionnaire which consists of a 7-point scale questionnaire. The questions which were included focused on the following: 'How do you feel about your job ?; How do you feel about people you work with – your co-workers ?; How do you feel about the work you do on your job – the work itself ?; What is it like where you work – the physical surroundings, the hours, the amount of work you are asked to do ?; How do you feel about what you have available for doing your job – meaning equipment, information, good supervision?' and so on. Levels of overall job

satisfaction were determined by calculating the average of each respondent's score on the questionnaire questions.

The mean job satisfaction score for males was 2.48 and for females 2.65 ( $p=0.8$ ) which is not significant at the 5% level or less. In order to include qualitative aspects in the study, researchers developed some open ended questions where participants were invited to provide a personal account to the question whether they would embark on the same career if they had the opportunity again. The findings suggest that males were mostly satisfied with outstanding opportunities for promotion, an exciting work environment and work that is intellectually stimulating. Females, on the other hand, indicated intellectually stimulating work as the most important factor followed by outstanding opportunities for promotion and an exciting work environment (Johnson et al., 1999). It is clear that also from a qualitative perspective, little difference is found between the sources of job satisfaction.

A study that took place in South Africa was the investigation done by Bowen et al. (2008). The researchers were interested in gender differences in job satisfaction, but they only managed to obtain 16 per cent female responses – making the study unrepresentative of the whole population.

The research into female leadership can be divided into two camps. On the one hand there is the assumption that there are no or few differences between the leadership style of male and female managers, but, on the other hand there is the camp that supports the gender stereotypical viewpoint where it is argued that clear gender differences do prevail (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). In the latter, female leadership is viewed as collaborative with an emphasis on problem solving and empathy (Helgesen, 1990). According to Alvesson and Billing (1997), the former camp is normally academic, with a lot of emphasis on empirical measurement and clear variables. The latter is much more associated with practitioners that will rely on qualitative investigations to support their theories.

To conclude, it is clear that there is no simple answer to whether females manage differently from their male counterparts. Alvesson and Billing (1997) rightly points out that individuals seeking a simple answer will be frustrated by the different outcomes in the literature, but also by the complexity of the phenomena. This is illustrated by the fact that there are not only unanswered questions regarding females within the business world, but also in the social environment. When analysing the South African context, the common characteristics of a patriarchal environment or society is the subordination of females. The general belief is that men are in control and that females need to obey them (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). This is

still especially true for the traditional black cultures in South Africa. However, traditional viewpoints of males assuming the role of main provider and females staying at home to raise the family, has changed dramatically in recent years (Broers, 2005). Modern families adopt a variety of different roles in order to balance social and family demands as well as work expectations. From a methodological perspective a limitation remains that the majority of the above-mentioned studies relied on quantitative eurocentric measuring instruments that are not necessarily applicable to an African sample.

### **3.2 GENDER AND ROLE DEMANDS**

Historically, organisations could impose rigid work demands on employees due to the majority of the workers being male while females stayed at home looking after the family (Bruce & Reed, 1994). Recently, however, the demographics of organisations have changed dramatically with an increase in minority groups and females in the workplace, changing the status quo forever. Organisations are now inclined to accommodate worker demands much more; especially with regards to the balance between work and family life (Hudson Institute, 1990).

The socialisation theory, however, postulates that males and females were brought up within environments where different expectations were associated with different gender roles. These expectations are then naturally brought into the workplace. As mentioned previously, females are groomed to focus on common values and social support whereas males are encouraged to produce traits such as being assertive (Eagly, 1987). Since the latter focuses more on values such as individual achievement and success, it can be assumed that this will contribute to the perception that male values are more inclined towards self-actualisation and self-development than females who are committed to a more social supportive viewpoint (Mason, 1997).

The structural theory, on the other hand, argues that any potential differences between male and female perceptions are due to other variables rather than gender (Guttek, 1988). It is suggested that the traditional sex-segregation of jobs in organisations will contribute to an environment where males will more naturally learn these agentic values and characteristics whereas the positions females find themselves in, are more inclined towards a social perspective in the work environment (Kanter, 1977).

### **3.2.1 Role conflict**

Martin (1993) is of the opinion that family responsibilities and issues still contribute to females not being able to progress in their careers. It is still assumed in many cultures that females' primary role is to look after family and children – especially if they are still young. Therefore, the dynamics between family and career might have an impact on female perceptions and attitudes towards their interests in careers.

Although it is commonly agreed that gender roles have changed in the past years, it is acknowledged that traditional expectations of roles in work and family is still prevalent (McElwain, Korablik & Rosin, 2005). Loscocco (1997) for example points out that men, but not women, view long working hours as an opportunity to invest in themselves and the organisation. This is supported by Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlach (2001) who stated that females, despite a more balanced distribution of family and work roles, still play a more active part in being primary caregivers than their male counterparts.

Where female managers and their husbands work similar hours, female managers were more involved with their children than their husbands. A possible explanation for lower involvement with children might be that husbands feel guilty that they do not spend enough time with their wives due to long working hours, and will try to create more time with them instead of with the children (Broers, 2005). Furthermore Pocock (2005) mentions that although there is a significant increase in females in the workplace, the traditional family roles are still kept. Therefore, it is understandable that female managers will still be the parent investing more time in the children.

Although the literature suggests that traditional roles are still prevalent and accepted, Super's (1990) lifespan theory supports multiple roles by implying that it creates different emotional channels for the individual with regards to values, abilities, interest, etcetera. Marks (1977) agrees by suggesting that activity in one particular role could result in energy to be used in other roles. The impact and influence of multiple roles on females will essentially be the product of their own needs, experiences and expectations of society (Anderson & Mietzitis 1999). This was an important factor to consider and acknowledge in the current investigation since female participants may have experienced different social expectations in their societies across South Africa.

### 3.2.1.1 Work-family conflict

Stein (2003) believes the world is currently experiencing the most important and influential metamorphosis with regards to the nature of work since the start of the Industrial Revolution. For the past decades many developed countries have moved from a so-called industrial-based national economy to an information-based global economy. To meet the associated business demands, employees are provided with any means of making it easier to communicate with work, for example with the use of wireless laptops, mobile phones and fax machines. These technologies enable employees to immediately communicate with their organisations and others globally. Therefore, as a result, much more flexibility with regards to work has been created (Cascio, 2003). Due to these emerging new technologies and imposing work demands on their personal lives, this conflict is relevant for males and females. However, as mentioned previously, role conflict for females manifest strongly in this area.

Findings of research into the impact of and reasons for work-family conflict on work and family demands are inconsistent. Time-based conflicts for instance point to too much time pressure at work so that there is not enough time for other important life roles. With regards to strain-based conflict, resources and energy are overstretched at work and consequently the latter interferes with other roles. And finally, behaviour conflict is expected when an individual's one role is not in line with other expected roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Another viewpoint comes from Zedeck (1992) who argues that in modern society, both males and females have two main roles in adulthood – namely in their family and at work. Clearly, if the roles and demands are incompatible, it can lead to stress and dissatisfaction (Netemeyr, Boles & McMurrian, 1996).

As mentioned, the study of women in management is increasingly popular. Alvesson and Billing (1997) argue that it is a large and ever evolving topic of interest. The reason for this is because as more females enter the job market and are appointed in senior managerial positions, the role of gender in the workplace becomes more significant and intricate (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000).

It is therefore important to note any possible factors that could contribute to work-family conflict. For example, work-family relations could disadvantage females in their career in a more practical manner. Females are very often less mobile due to their priorities towards their families and are often reluctant to accept positions with long working hours, more travel or having to move geographically. It is argued that one of the main challenges for females

in the work environment is the expectation of managers to work longer hours and to put all their energy into their jobs (Martin, 1993). Also, Pocock (2001) points out that managers' working days normally consist of stress, long hours and a high workload. This will inevitably have a negative impact on family relationships and the individual.

This is supported by Aryee, Tan and Srinivas (2004) who state that there is an increased interest in the work-family conflict phenomenon due to the increase of females in the labour market, dual-earner families and single parent families that need to juggle the demands of family and work. This will naturally place more pressure on the dual demands of family and work. The crisis develops when different role demands become incompatible which leads to the experience of conflict and stress (Howard, Boles & Donofrio, 2004). Unfortunately, work-family conflict is unavoidable in modern society due to the different demands of work on our personal lives. The work environment has changed to a more globalised, efficiency driven phenomenon that will inevitably have an impact on workers (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2006).

Many researchers interested in the study of work values will inevitably ask whether work-family conflict has an impact on job satisfaction. According to Ezra and Deckman (1996), there is significant evidence in the literature suggesting a link between job satisfaction and work-family conflict. It is, however, not clear whether the link between family and job satisfaction is causal or non-causal (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1994). Adams, King and King (1996) and Howard, Boles and Donofrio (2004) found numerous examples in literature where there is a correlation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. As work-family conflict increases, job satisfaction decreases which could lead to an increase in employees' intent to leave the organisation.

Further supportive evidence comes from Kossek and Ozeki (1998) who argue that there is evidence of stress arising when employees try to manage and balance the different roles they are expected to fulfil. The experience of stress can then have a direct influence on the employee's levels of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. However, contrary to this, Grandey, Cordeiro and Crouter (2005) are of the opinion that, although a link is found between job satisfaction and work-family conflict, the influence, direction or impact on each other remains questionable.

Despite both males and females suggesting that they choose family life above careers, it tends to be females who will be more willing to accept family responsibilities associated with

such decisions (Goh, 1991; Voydanoff, 1988). Similarly, males will have more work demands having an impact on their family responsibilities.

When focusing particularly on females, Parry and Warr (1980) explain the tension or strain experienced by women as rooted in trying to cope with domestic and paid work simultaneously. However, females also struggle with a variety of social demands since the perception develops that they are often more interested and concerned about their families than their work demands (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This could result in sanctioning females from various aspects of the work environment which could then inevitably lead to the experience of guilt.

Notably though, in a study by Brink and De la Rey (2001), it was found that females do tend to manage their work-family demands fairly well. A possible explanation might be that the sample used was reasonably established in both family and career roles and that would clearly have an impact on results. It is evident that couples who have been in a long term relationship, have older children and are relatively established in their prospective careers tend to experience less work-family conflict than those who are in new relationships or have young children (Gilbert & Rachlin, 1987).

It seems therefore evident that merely assuming that work-family conflict will be prevalent with all females responsible for children or families is a simplified and reductionist viewpoint. Factors such as age of children, the individual's establishment in her career and so forth could be extraneous variables that could have a significant impact on research results.

From a research perspective, it is acknowledged that the majority of studies into the world of work have focused on perceptions of men. Where some studies did include the perceptions of females, many of these were seen as similar to males (Statt, 2004), therefore supporting the androcentric nature of research into the world of work. The general consensus is that work is still secondary to female responsibilities, and it seems as if employers and trade unions both enhance that assumption (Statt, 2004).

With reference to methodological issues, Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) highlight the notion that researchers also need to acknowledge the bi-directional nature of work and family. As a result, Gutek, Searle and Klepa (1991) argued that it is not necessarily only work having an impact on family (WFC), but also family potentially having an impact on work. However, Frone (2003) found that although a strong correlation was found between



work-family conflict and family-work conflict, participants regularly indicate work influencing family more than vice versa.

When focusing on ethnicity, it is suggested in literature that females with very strong racial or ethnic identities tend to struggle more in the challenge of being in two different worlds – their family and their work demands. The work environment in South Africa is still dominated by white males and their personal worlds are characterised by their community or race (Bell, 1990). Auster (2001) is of opinion that this additional strain of biculturalism could contribute to higher levels of stress due to the conflict in role demands. Bell (1990) therefore argues that due to the impact of race, ethnicity and gender in the workplace, more research should be done to study the impact on specifically midcareer satisfaction.

However, experiencing close links with one's ethnic community or environment may have a positive effect in the workplace. Close links with ethnic communities can lead to a developed and centralised network which could provide a training platform for useful skills in the workplace such as being able to communicate effectively, working as part of a team or to establish a work network (Auster, 2001).

Even after admitting the different findings in the literature, one still needs to acknowledge that much of the work-family research has been done in prosperous Western countries. A natural philosophy of these countries is supporting the notion of individualism and encouraging organisations to create support for employees in both their work and family roles (Hofstede, 2001). In these countries, gender equality is propagated in the sense that they acknowledge the importance of both work and family for males and females. Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco and Lau (2003) consequently point out that few studies have focused on less prosperous countries, nor on countries in the East where a more collectivist philosophy is prevalent.

Similarly one needs to acknowledge that South African participants, being citizens of a developing country, might have some interesting results to produce with regards to the impact of work on family and vice versa. Since the majority of the workforce is of African nature, one needs to ask the question whether traditional values and beliefs will have a significant impact on black employees.

### 3.2.1.2 Conclusion

The appointment of more black females in organisations was supported by the Employment Equity Act of 1998, where the employment of especially black females was accelerated by means of affirmative action which tried to erase some of the inequalities of the past (McCallum, 2005). According to McCallum (2005), black women were stigmatised in the past not only for being female, but also for being black. Fortunately the Employment Equity Act, No 55, had a very significant impact on the implementation of human resource policies in current South African organisations (Düweke, 2004).

However, as positive as these figures might seem, limited South African research has been conducted to investigate work-related values in more depth and detail. Many studies that have been mentioned in the chapter originated in countries such as the UK, USA and Australia. For instance, Long (2005) did not find gender differences in job satisfaction, but the study was Australian-based and quantitative of nature. The investigation used a quantitative measuring instrument which is eurocentric in nature and can therefore not be applicable to an African sample. Similarly, Clark (1996) and Sloane and Williams (2000) illustrate findings from a Westernised perspective since the studies were UK based.

It is clear that although job satisfaction has been intensively studied and investigated in the literature, little evidence exists to support organisations with their current challenges in South Africa. Although the literature has ample evidence to support and contradict gender differences in job satisfaction, very little has been done on particularly South African samples. It is argued that South African organisations experienced a steep learning curve the past 15 years and were forced to accommodate and embrace new labour legislation. It can be argued that in many cases, the main focus was to manage Affirmative Action and all its consequences and that very few organisations have had the luxury to investigate and invest in the work-based values experienced by their employees. Since so many females entered not only the job market but also managerial positions, it is imperative for organisations to not only manage, but also support this new workforce as effectively as possible.

The present study therefore focused on gender differences related to job satisfaction and also approached it from a cultural perspective. The majority of studies are eurocentric in nature and use Westernised quantitative job satisfaction questionnaires. Bar one, no studies were found which was qualitative in nature in order to attempt to understand the lived experiences of not only females, but black females in particular, in the work environment.

It is argued that the approach to the investigation into job satisfaction will need to change in order to accommodate the new multicultural workforce. As a result, the eurocentric measurements of job satisfaction seems inappropriate and outdated and would need to be reconsidered with new methods of investigation created to be applicable in the modern South African context. The aim of this investigation was to use a qualitative methodology to establish possible sources of job satisfaction which could lead to further research in developing a non-biased quantitative job satisfaction questionnaire for a multi-cultural South African sample.

### **3.3 CULTURE AND THE ROLE IN JOB SATISFACTION**

From a South African perspective, it is assumed that, due to our multicultural workforce, special attention needs to be paid to the impact of culture on work values. In order to appreciate and understand the cultural differences among not only employees, but also managers, Krossa (1996) is of the opinion that it is essential to define a culture in order to fully understand it since it seems common practice to compare culture with the expected norms. Such an approach and viewpoint could be viewed as ethnocentric. In order to solve these discrepancies and sometimes arrogant attitudes, it is necessary to begin to investigate another culture's perceptions from within that culture and try to address its needs as viewed by that specific group (Krossa, 1996). Hiebert (1996) defines ethnocentrism as the emotional response people have when faced with a new culture. This response is due to the individual's attitude to the other culture and its characteristics. It will then result in an individual believing that his or her culture is superior and more important in comparison with the 'other' culture he is challenged by (Elmer, 1993).

Inglehart (1977) rightly emphasises the importance of the impact of culture on individual values. It is argued that although variables such as politics are important, they are on their own not necessarily imperative in contributing to the development of human values. It is suggested that the individual's values are developed by the interaction between culture and the environment. Culture can therefore be seen as the process whereby the individual or employee acknowledges change which ultimately again will impact on his or her interpretation of the environment.

Booyesen (1999) argue that, due to globalisation and internationalisation, one also needs to acknowledge the role and impact of work values within the multi-cultural and multi-racial South African work context. These variables contributed to the awareness of culture,

language, race and gender within organisations. Also, due to the impact of affirmative action and other legislative matters, South African organisations and their workforce experienced significant changes – especially with regards to the recruitment and progress of black males and females in the workplace.

From a work perspective it is acknowledged that employees will exert specific needs for satisfaction, but that their cultural values and the socialisation process will have a significant impact on their individual needs (Kanungo, 1983). It can therefore be argued that aspects such as job satisfaction and job stress may vary from employee to employee due to the different cognitive, affective and motivational aspects associated with their cultures of origin (Chiu & Kosinski, 1999).

### **3.3.1 Value systems**

In order to effectively manage individuals in an organisation, it is therefore a prerequisite to understand the cultural values deemed as important by employees. For example, Khoza (1994) argues that it is idealistic to believe that any business culture could be forced upon employees without considering the cultural backgrounds of these workers. He states that South African corporations are guilty of this approach since they follow a more eurocentric attitude where, for example, decision-making is experienced from top-down instead of considering communal discussion and agreement. Khoza (1994) furthermore is of the opinion that unless these eurocentric practices are evaluated and questioned, organisations therefore fail to address the needs of the culturally diverse employee workforce.

Lessem and Nussbaum (1996) came to the conclusion that South African organisations consist of two main cultures, namely a eurocentric business culture which is founded in the Anglo-Saxon individualistic viewpoints while afrocentric business cultures are founded in the African collectivist paradigm. Not surprisingly, Godsell (1981) suggested, after studying the impact of race and class on work values, that black employees strongly prefer a collectivist approach to work. This is further supported by Adonisi (1994) who claims that there are both individualist and communal orientations in current business organisations in South Africa. The chosen philosophy is based on the particular racial group the employee belongs to (i.e. coloured, Asian, black or white). From a practical perspective it is evident that black and white employees will have different expectations within the work context. For example, Koopman (1994) points out that whites predominantly prioritise the philosophy of individualism and self-development in order to support democracy and liberalism. Blacks, on

the other hand, believe that the employer is part of society and therefore the individual needs to find his or her place in the structure of society. To a large extent, the individual will then place his or her needs secondary to the common needs of the organisation.

Many African cultures are associated with the belief that 'a person is a person because of or through others'. This approach is more commonly known as ubuntu in the South African context. This approach emphasises aspects such as unity, dignity, compassion and mutual interest (Bekker, 2006). According to Mbigi (1997) the five well-known key values of this construct are solidarity, spirit, compassion, respect and dignity.

From an organisational perspective Prime (1999) argues that the management style of ubuntu is a humanistic philosophy, or an epistemology which focuses primarily on people. This philosophy strongly encourages individuals to gain support through the group and the engagement of the group. Aspects such as cooperation, respect, unity and harmony will naturally follow from this. Central to ubuntu is the principle of solidarity and group conformity. With regards to challenges of potential survival, it is clearly expected of the group to display compassion, dignity, openness and cooperation. The main concern therefore is for people and working towards the wellbeing of all. Consequently, this belief system is uncomfortable with westernised individualism and potential competitiveness which acknowledges the person as an individual (Booyesen, 2001).

Within the work environment and from an organisational perspective, the impact of ubuntu is far reaching. It supports the notion of teamwork down to ground level and encourages individuals to potentially forfeit their own personal aims and goals for that of the group (Mbigi, 1995). Clearly it has a profound impact on the leadership and managerial styles of employees embracing this philosophy.

Steyn and Motshabi (1996) are of the opinion that South African organisations are moving towards a more afrocentric managerial approach in comparison with the historical eurocentric approach adopted before the 1994 democratic elections. However, it is necessary that all organisations in South Africa should aspire to find that balance between the so-called traditional eurocentric viewpoints carved into the colonial past of our country and the approach of ubuntu.

### **3.3.2 Challenges in multi-cultural management**

Knowledge and acknowledgement of preferred cultural values are not the only answer to effective multicultural management. Modern managers need to adopt a holistic picture of many possible variables that could impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of their multicultural workforce. For instance, Gold, Webb and Smith (1982) found that black employees are significantly less satisfied with their jobs in comparison with their white colleagues. From a cultural perspective it could be argued that different values and beliefs contribute to different perceptions regarding job satisfaction.

Consequently it is mentioned by Jackson (1999) that there are clear differences in levels of job satisfaction among cultural groups. Interestingly, it was found that managers from other cultural groups were more dissatisfied with elements such as equal opportunities implementation and affirmative action than white managers. It can possibly be that the former expected more change and improvement whereas the white managers accepted that change was either needed or inevitable. Support for this comes from Bowen et al. (2008) who note that various research studies have been done on the different levels of job satisfaction among black and white workers. Some studies indicated that black employees have higher job satisfaction levels whereas the contrary was also concluded in other studies. Friday, Moss and Friday (2004) rightly mention that literature gives contradicting messages with regards to this issue. Limited reference in the literature was found regarding studies focusing on the experiences of particularly black female managers in the South African context.

To explain this, Bartel (1981) suggests that there might be two reasons why black workers experience less job satisfaction than their white counterparts. Firstly, historically it could be argued that blacks had reduced abilities or opportunities to properly and informatively assess the current market they work in. It can also be argued that from an employer perspective, it is easier to avoid anti-discriminatory legislation by focusing on aspects of the job that is difficult to assess as opposed to wages or salaries. Contradictory to this theory, Bartel (1981) also states that blacks can experience higher levels of job satisfaction due to the historical discrimination which resulted in lower needs, aspirations and ambitions for black workers. This is yet another example of often confusing assumptions and conclusions derived from the literature.

One also needs to acknowledge not only the historical perspective related to potential cultural differences, but also the current socio-economic environment that different cultures

embrace or even challenge. For instance, the adoption of more democratic gender beliefs began in the prosperous West and is now expanding to other areas of the world (Murray, 2002). The workforce around the world includes many more dual-earner families who have the responsibility of children and often elderly parents (Hill & Henderson, 2004). The demands of balancing work and home has become an increasingly complex situation for both males and females in various cultures around the world (Hill, Yang & Hawkins, 2004).

Chiu and Kosinski (1999) argue that the cultural background of the individual will also have an impact on how the individual lives and works. Many employees, however, deal with this challenge, as highlighted by Markus and Kitayama (1991), when socialising with other group members on a personal level or at work. This interaction will gradually change the cognitive, emotional and motivational processes of the employees in order to fit into the socially defined constructs. When this process is completed, it will ultimately help the individual to live and work in his original cultural context or to adjust to the social context experienced with workers who are not members of their own culture (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

The fact that many employees still value their cultural heritage can naturally be positive. Drucker, Dyson, Handy, Saffo and Senge (1997), for example, are of the opinion that cultural diversity can contribute to the competitive advantage of an organisation, if managed appropriately. This is, however, a challenge since if the contrary is true it could lead to much frustration and potential disaster for an organisation. To succeed, Drucker et al. (1997) state that this implies not only avoiding negative outcomes, but recognising and acknowledging the real challenges and opportunities of working with a culturally diverse workforce. It is therefore argued that organisations need to act proactively towards cultural diversity.

Directing the argument to a managerial level, Booyesen (2001) points out that there are clear leadership differences among white and black South African managers. It is argued that these characteristics are linked back to sub-cultural influences which are then displayed within managerial and leadership styles. It is furthermore argued that these differences are not necessarily negative, but could rather be seen as a positive attribute to an organisational hierarchy which could naturally lead to higher levels of competitive advantage. The contrary is also true due to the fact that when neglecting to manage these differences in appropriate ways, it could lead to conflict and misunderstanding among employees and managers (Booyesen, 2001).

From a research perspective, Jacob (2003) mentions that multicultural management is growing to a very important area of development within research. It is argued that it is specifically important to managers working in international markets, but similarly, it is applicable to managers who work in organisations with a diverse workforce who are not necessarily in another country. Clearly one of the main emphases of intercultural management is the emphasis of managing employees from different cultural contexts.

Data from the Employment Equity Reports (2002-2003) suggest that 62 per cent of middle level management positions are held by white males whilst black males only account for 17 per cent of such positions. A similar picture is prevalent with regards to females. It has been found that white females have been appointed to 16 per cent of middle level positions while their black counterparts only fill 5 per cent of such posts (Littrell & Nkomo, 2005).

In a study by Booysen (2001) it was evident that there is a correlation between the culture of white managers and eurocentric management values while black managers display a more afrocentric approach to leadership. It is concluded that while whites are more results-driven in their management practices while black managers focus more on people-driven principles associated with ubuntu. Interestingly, it was also found the cultural orientation differences between black and white female managers do exist. It appeared that black females placed more emphasis on concerns for fellow employees and encouraged interdependence while white females highlighted the importance of independence and future planning (Booyesen, 2001).

Another study done by Thomas and Bendixen (2000) found the contrary, however. No cultural differences were found among managers in their study. In this particular investigation, Hofstede's model of national culture was used to investigate the ethnic diversity on managerial effectiveness in South Africa. It was apparent that although managers related to their racial groups, a shared national culture was also evident. Notable characteristics of the common culture were very high levels of individualism, average long-term orientation and very low power distance. These findings are similar to those in the Netherlands, UK and USA. These contradictory findings to Booysen (2001) could possibly be explained by acknowledging the special nature of African collectivism in terms of communalism. Personal individualism and personal community are viewed in line with each other where it is implied that individuals are allowed to act autonomously, but are still regarded as members of social groups within the community (Thomas & Bendixen, 2000).



It is acknowledged in this chapter that one of the main challenges of modern South African organisations is to manage multi-culturalism in their work environment (Louw & Jackson, 2008; Rijamampianina & Maxwell, 2002). This is interchangeable with the demands of managing change in the modern world of work. These authors furthermore point out that although this challenge is known, very little support in the literature is found to help managers with the dilemma. Possible reasons for the lack of sufficient attention in the literature could be due to many studies using samples for short-term purposes only and not focusing on the practicalities of a whole-organisation approach. It therefore lacks an aspect of reality. It is also argued that even in existing literature, there are confounding results which clearly is not helpful. For example, some studies found that multi-culturalism is a positive phenomenon within a work setting and could contribute to productivity, whereas others find the opposite. It is therefore argued that investigators interested in applied cultural studies face challenges such as clearly defining variables, choosing appropriate data collection techniques and providing acceptable scientific evidence for assumptions made (Rijamampianina & Maxwell, 2002).

In order to address these managerial related issues and challenges, it is argued that management should focus on cultural-specific variables such as interpersonal relations and perceptions of power and authority (Human, 2005). It is fair to accept that, due to different cultural backgrounds and experiences, managers will view management-related variables from different socio-cultural and political spectra. This notion is supported by Jackson (1999) who also mentions that managers will have different perspectives regarding employees in the organisations since Westernised perspectives view people as a resource to achieve a goal whereas the African perspective (ubuntu) sees people as a value in itself.

Therefore, according to Maritz (2002), managers in South Africa are faced with unique challenges, closely associated with the uniqueness of this country. Adding to this pressure, South African organisations are under severe international pressure to perform well and are under constant evaluation and assessment.

### **3.4 MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGEMENT**

It is argued that the main purpose of the role of managers is to effectively and efficiently guide organisations to achieve a specific outcome or goal. Since all organisations have a particular goal or objective, it is the responsibility of the manager to combine and use organisational resources in order to fulfil the desired outcome. Managers, in other words,

are responsible for encouraging and motivating individuals in the organisation to work toward the collective achievement of the organisational goal (Certo, 1983; Karpin, 1995). Managers are responsible for the maintenance and development of the skills and performance of subordinates in order to achieve organisational goals. The emphasis in this definition is firstly to focus on the subordinate to aid in the delivery of the expectation (Philip, 1990).

Hampton (1977) furthermore defines management as the process of control and combining a variety of resources within an organisation. It includes aspects and skills such as leading, organising and planning. Certo (1983) shares this viewpoint by pointing out that there is some agreement in the literature about the common characteristics of management. This includes the assumption that management is a continuous process of inter-related tasks; that management concentrates and focuses on obtaining organisational goals and outcomes; and the way in which the goals are achieved, is by utilising employees and other organisational resources.

According to Cook and Hunsaker (2001) the main purpose of managers is to use and work with individuals in order to achieve specific objectives. It requires the managers to have a holistic understanding of his or her organisation in order to have an impact on aspects such as technology, people and tasks. Clearly, managers also need to have expert knowledge of the environments in which their organisations function and have a full understanding of how external variables could have an impact on the organisation's performance and actions. Examples of such external forces would include the inevitable improvement of technology that has an impact on work processes; the determination and advantages of other competing role players in the market; a change in social behaviours which has an impact on employees' expectations and values; and the change in perception being associated with political and economic forces that could impact on policies, agreements and so forth. It is therefore the main goal of the manager to coordinate the organisation with the environment that is ever changing (Cook & Hunsaker, 2001).

The human capital theory furthermore suggests that aspects such as education and training are behind the career progression of individuals. The reason why females are disadvantaged in the labour market is due to their lack of relevant education, work experience, experiences in different work places and even working overseas (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). According to Simpson (1996), since females have less experience and investment in managerial relevant qualifications, it can explain why females are paid less in comparison with their white male counterparts.

The role and importance of middle level managers in organisations are important to explore. As mentioned previously, Bellingan-Timmer (2004) is of opinion that a bureaucratic organisational structure aims to encourage and develop standardised practices across all levels of the organisation. It does not encourage the opinions and input of its employees in such practices and policies. Drucker (1961) is therefore clear in the assumption that the role of middle level management is of importance since the middle level manager is the so-called buffer between strategic managerial policies and the operational duties and performances of lower level employees. It is thus clear that top management should support the middle level manager as far as possible in order to ensure that chosen policies and demands are carried out sufficiently (Bellingan-Timmer, 2004).

Bellingan-Timmer (2004) furthermore defines a middle level manager as the middle man between those representing the top level in the organisation and those working at the lower levels. Middle level managers are influenced by many factors such as their unique set of values and role perception, needs and natural strengths (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). On the other hand, according to Robbins (1987), the role of top management is to give direction, to establish an organisational climate, develop structures, procedures and consequent policies that represent the values of such an organisation.

As mentioned earlier, the middle level manager will, like all other employees, have a perception about his or her role and influence in the organisational hierarchy (Mintzberg, 1973). These perceptions will have a crucial impact on the efforts put in by the middle level manager to strive to achieve the organisational goals as set out by top management. Therefore Bellingan-Timmer (2004) encourages top management to be aware of the perceptions of middle level managers when proposing policies and strategies since the middle level manager needs to support and believe in these strategies in order to successfully promote it to subordinates in the operational level of the organisation.

When aiming to change the values in organisations, middle level managers have an important role to play. Organisations failing to obtain the full support of middle managers will find it difficult to communicate the improvements across the different levels of the organisation. In the daily interaction with ground-level staff, middle level managers will share and translate the strategic message with ground-level staff. It is therefore imperative that middle level managers buy into any strategic visions developed by the executive management (Jackson & Humble, 1994).

There are contradicting findings in the literature regarding levels of job satisfaction among managers on different hierarchical levels in the organisation. Placing emphasis on hierarchical level, Kline and Boyd (1991) suggest that levels of job satisfaction increase for those workers working higher up in the hierarchy. These workers mentioned salary and being satisfied by the organisation as the main variable in job satisfaction. However, they indicated that they were least satisfied with promotional aspects, which can be explained by the fact that there will most probably be far less promotional opportunities than lower down in the hierarchy.

It was found that when the job satisfaction of middle level managers and senior managers were compared, very little difference was found between the variables indicated to contribute to job satisfaction. Due to different job demands, it is assumed that variables associated with job satisfaction will also differ. Aspects that were particularly interest were their immediate line manager, colleagues on the same level, the job itself and subordinates. It is clear that these are mainly aspects where managers perceive some form of control over the situation (Kline & Boyd, 1991).

Also, an early study done by Kollarik and Mullner (1975), found that managers on higher levels in the organisation were satisfied with aspects such as decision making and influence on strategic planning whereas managers on lower levels were more satisfied by aspects such as self-actualisation and feeling fulfilled in the work environment. This is supported by Bergmann (1981) who claims that there is a positive correlation between hierarchical level and job satisfaction. A possible explanation of such a relationship could be that the higher in the hierarchy, the more challenging the job becomes.

However, according to Frances (1986), managers higher up in the hierarchy experience less job satisfaction than those working on a lower level. This is clearly contradictory to previous research that claimed that job satisfaction increases with hierarchical level. A possible explanation for France's findings could also be that employees in managerial and executive levels in organisations embark on less interaction and people orientation in their jobs. It seems as if they are much more job-orientated than people-orientated (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

Education could also be a significant variable in determining the levels of job satisfaction of managers. However, there are different opinions in the literature regarding the relationship between education and levels of perceived job satisfaction (Pang & Lee, 2002). The logical assumption to make is that higher investment in education will inevitably lead to better jobs

which will then result in higher levels of job satisfaction. Bergmann (1981) found that the higher educational levels managers obtain, the more they tend to be satisfied with aspects such as organisational aims, strategies and staffing issues in comparison with managers educated on a lower level. Being on a higher level in the organisation, managers tend to enjoy better co-worker relationships and experience the ability to voice their opinions more openly.

However, the opposite has also been found where education raises expectations and in some cases, organisations cannot or will not meet the higher educated employee's expectations. This will consequently lead to a decrease in levels of job satisfaction. For instance, Clark and Oswald (1996) are of the opinion that there is a positive correlation between educational levels and these workers' perceptions regarding the type of job they should have. It is, however, argued that such a viewpoint could be questioned since workers could be motivated to educate themselves more due to high expectations but also, that higher educated employees could have higher expectations about their work. Therefore, the direction of the correlation between job satisfaction and educational levels becomes inconclusive (Clark & Oswald, 1996).

Ross and Reskin (1992) on the other hand, found no link between job satisfaction and education. They argue that highly educated employees will apply for jobs where they can influence the work itself, co-workers and subordinates as well as finances. These educated workers will therefore have higher extrinsic and intrinsic motivational levels due to the type of jobs they have chosen to apply for. An opposing viewpoint has been highlighted by Clark (1996) who suggests a negative relationship with levels of education and job satisfaction. A possible explanation could be the discrepancy between an individual's aspirations and the reality of the job which does not comply with initial expectations (Long, 2005).

Bergmann (1981) is of the opinion that the older, more educated managers will experience job satisfaction in this regard probably more than their younger, less educated colleagues. It could be argued that the younger managers do not experience the measure of impact or influence they expected from a job on a higher level.

From a life stage and age perspective, researchers are of the opinion that age has a significant impact on job satisfaction. Clark, Oswald and Warr (1996) and Ducharme and Martin (2000) are of the opinion that job satisfaction increases with age. It is assumed that dissatisfied older workers will leave the job at a certain point in their career, while the more satisfied workers will continue. Alternatively, one could also argue that older workers have

managed after so many years to be in a job that is satisfying and compatible to their needs and requirements whilst younger workers are still trying to find their feet on the occupational ladder (McKenna, 2000).

Consequently Hochwater, Ferris, Perrewe, Witt and Kiewitz (2001) developed a U-shape relationship between age and job satisfaction. They suggested that younger workers are idealistic and often have high expectations about the new career they embark on. As they settle into their job, they begin to realise that perhaps their ambition and hopes are not being met and consequently they start to compare themselves with workers in other jobs. It is also more difficult for younger workers to obtain these higher, more rewarding positions they strive for. These positions are usually filled with older, more experienced workers who will inevitably experience higher levels of job satisfaction in general than their younger colleagues.

Clark (1996) also suggested the existence of a U-shaped relationship between job satisfaction and age. It is argued that workers in their twenties and thirties are least satisfied with their work environment and jobs whilst workers aged 60 and over experienced the highest levels of overall job satisfaction.

However, a second viewpoint is that there is a linear relationship between the two phenomena. Pang and Lee (2002) propose that younger employees could be dissatisfied with intrinsic aspects of their jobs such as responsibility, intellectual challenge and autonomy. Although employees progress in their careers, it can happen that there are limited promotional opportunities according to their age and work experience. Such experiences could contribute to higher levels of job dissatisfaction.

In a survey done with managers, they found that about 25 per cent of managers who completed the survey indicated that they were unsatisfied with their jobs and careers. When they reach their thirties, the number of dissatisfied managers decline, but the major correlation is not job satisfaction anymore, but rather the perception of being caught up in a career or organisation without any alternative options available. By their late thirties the shift is towards their perception that time and options are running out or that they are still caught up into their jobs or careers. This trend continues in the forties where more than 50 per cent of managers feel confined to their work situation and that their families don't really care about their career experiences. By the late forties, employees tend to either accept their fate or ignore any aspects contributing to their dissatisfaction. Managers in their fifties indicated higher levels of job satisfaction. A possible explanation can be that many of these

respondents made peace with their situation and started to look forward to retirement (Hunt & Collins, 1983). One could clearly argue that these findings could be questioned in modern society with individuals in many incidents exploring and experiencing several careers in their work life.

Closely related to age and education is the perception of locus of control. According to Spector (1988) and Rotter (1966), locus of control refers to the individual's perception that any life outcomes or rewards are either controlled by the individual's own actions and behaviour or by other external variables. Rotter (1966) clarifies this viewpoint by arguing individuals experience an internal perceptive continuum that any outcomes are the consequence of internal variables whereas external beliefs argue that outcomes are unrelated to behaviour of the individuals. From a work perspective, Spector (1982) is of opinion that locus of control is linked to satisfaction, perception of the job, performance and motivation and that it acts as some form of a mediator between satisfaction and turnover on the one hand and incentives and motivation on the other hand.

In addition, Afolabi (2005) found a significant influence of locus of control on worker's job satisfaction levels. It was found the employees with a high internal locus of control are more satisfied with their jobs in comparison with those with a high external locus of control. This viewpoint is supported by Idemudia, Adebayo and Ilora (2000) who point out that those workers with high internal locus of control are more satisfied with their jobs due to the fact that they react better in stressful work situations and are also more motivated in their jobs.

Interestingly, Carrim, Basson and Coetzee (2006) believe that job satisfaction is linked to internal locus of control whereas job dissatisfaction is associated with external locus of control. It is clear that individual differences and different levels of locus of control contribute to various behavioural traits in the work environment. For instance, workers with high levels of external locus of control find it challenging to address work-related issues and uncertainty in their work environment (Rahim & Psenicka, 1996). However, those individuals with low levels of external locus of control tend to be satisfied with most aspects associated with job satisfaction (Pretorius & Rothmann, 2001).

From a gender perspective, it is clear that research into locus of control had mixed results (Muhonen & Torkelson, 2004). Some studies indicate no gender differences in locus of control whereas others do indicate such differences (Carrim, Basson & Coetzee, 2006).

Above-mentioned highlights the importance of a holistic perspective regarding the role of management and variables influencing job satisfaction. It is clear from the literature that not only dimensions of job satisfaction relate to satisfaction at work, but also demographic factors such as the age of the manager, educational background and perception of locus of control contribute to an employee's experiences at work.

## **Summary**

This chapter highlighted the importance of non-negotiable variables which are also contributory to the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees in organisations. As seen in the literature, there are often very confusing and contradicting findings with regards to not only the role and impact of gender on this phenomena, but also different perspectives of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is argued that no one case could be viewed in isolation without acknowledging factors such as socio-political influences, the often stereotypical viewpoints regarding gender roles and also the very often difficult expectations placed on the shoulders of those in the intermediate level in an organisation.

In order to address these issues and inconsistencies, it has been decided to follow a qualitative research paradigm to attempt to investigate and explore determinants and factors influencing job satisfaction in more depth and detail. It is argued that an exploratory investigation will benefit the research at this stage more than yet another quantitative research investigation.

Therefore, the next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework employed in this investigation as well as the method of data analysis used to pay closer attention to information provided by means of semi-structured interviews.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The aim of the chapter is to describe and justify the methodology selected for the investigation. This includes a justification of the sample and sampling technique used, followed by a description of the data collection strategies. This is followed by a discussion of the analytical and interpretative strategies employed to analyse the data. A sample demonstration of how the data were analysed in Chapter 5, is included. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on how ethical issues were addressed and it is followed by a critical investigation into limitations of the investigation. In conclusion, an overview is given on the reliability and validity of the research methodology.

#### **4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Due to the dearth of literature focusing on the experiences of specifically black middle level managers in organisations, the proposed study was exploratory in its character in order to try and provide an in-depth study into aspects contributing to job satisfaction for these particular participants. It was decided to choose a qualitative approach for the study since, considering available measuring instruments and literature addressing the topic, it was clear that no one quantitative measuring instrument has been developed to measure levels of job satisfaction taking the socio-economic and historical South African context into consideration. Quantitative measuring instruments such as the Job Descriptive Index and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire were considered, but repudiated due to the complex social and historical nature of the chosen participants. It is argued that a qualitative approach would create an opportunity for detailed accounts of the phenomena and would give the researcher the opportunity to understand and explore the perceptions of the managers in more depth and rich detail (Berg, 1998).

##### **4.1.1 Research aims**

As discussed in more depth in Chapter 1, the aim of the study was to contribute to existing knowledge about theoretical, methodological and descriptive applications in the field of black managerial job satisfaction. From a theoretical and methodological perspective, it was the aim of the study to illustrate how the qualitative approach to data analysis, based on recordings and with the assistance of interpretative phenomenological analytical techniques, generates a detailed, effective account of the true meaning of job satisfaction. It was

furthermore the aim of the study to demonstrate the extent to which males and females differ in their perceptions regarding satisfaction at work. From a descriptive perspective, the study aimed to describe the constructive work variables as identified by black managers. At an applied level it was envisioned that the study could contribute to the development of a more rigorous, less eurocentric, unbiased approach to the investigation of job satisfaction in South African organisations.

#### **4.1.2 Sample**

A sample of 4 male and 4 female black middle level managers was selected for the investigation. The sample was segmented by the following demographic categories, namely gender, age, marital status, first language, educational level, employment industry, job sector and job tenure.

#### **4.1.3 Measuring instruments**

The technique employed by Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied to measure the perceptions of job satisfaction. IPA consists of three main philosophical branches. This includes phenomenology, hermeneutics and an ideographic approach. As mentioned in Chapter 1, phenomenology is interested in the ways participants make sense of their main life experiences, or then in this investigation, their positive experiences at work. IPA is therefore phenomenological in aiming to explore these lived experiences of the participants. The researcher was specifically interested in how these experiences have had an impact on participants, not only in their work environment, but also potentially in their personal lives (Smith et al., 2009).

It is also the viewpoint of IPA that individuals aim to make sense of their experiences. The researcher was consequently curious to investigate how participants analyse and interpret the significant aspects of their work environments as mentioned in the study. In IPA it is also argued that researchers are involved in a so-called double hermeneutic process since both participant and researcher are attempting to understand the chosen phenomena. The participant will share and construct meaning of experiences and memories whilst the researcher will aim to once again interpret the knowledge as shared by the participant (Smith et al., 2009).

Finally, IPA is also referred to as ideographic since it undertakes to examine the particulars of a chosen case in full detail. In other words, the researcher is focused on everything the participants had to share and how they made sense of it. IPA's interest in the specific engage on two levels, that is the undertaking to study detail and also an understanding of how the chosen phenomenon has been understood from the unique experience and perspective of the participants involved in the investigation (Smith et al., 2009).

## **4.2 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE STRUCTURE**

Various factors were considered in the in the process of selecting participants for the investigation.

### **4.2.1 Sampling**

The sample consisted of 8 (N=8) black middle level managers in different organisations across South Africa. This included organisations in higher and tertiary education and manufacturing. Random or representative sampling is normally used in quantitative investigations to represent a chosen population statistically. In qualitative research, such a requirement is not necessary. Therefore, the two sampling techniques I have decided to use in the study were purposive and snowball sampling. The rationale for the selection of these two techniques was that they were complementary of the study. Considerations such as the researcher's access to the target population as well as the characteristics of the chosen sample highlighted the need for the chosen sampling techniques. Within purposive sampling, the researcher selects a group of people or a case because it resembles certain features or aspects that we are interested in (Silverman, 2006). The decision to use purposive rather than random sampling also lies in the fact that the chosen group closely resembles what is being studied (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). In other words, this method assisted the researcher in finding a reasonable homogeneous sample. In this particular case, participants had to be black, work at middle management level and be able to have a conversation in English. Since both the researcher's and participants' first language would not be the same, it was decided to conduct the interview in the second language of both parties involved. Due to the small sample size and the homogeneous nature, attempts were made to select participants from industries with common characteristics such as education. Snowball sampling was employed when interviewees suggested other appropriate candidates to participate in the investigation based on the selection criteria.

## 4.2.2 Sample structure

The sample size and structure is represented in the table below. The sample size was 8 middle level managers.

**Table 4.1 Overall sample structure**

Gender	Age Group	Marital Status	First Language	Educational Level	Employment Industry	Job Sector	Job Tenure
F	36-40	Single	Xhosa	Tertiary	Further Education	Public	1-3 years
F	31-35	Single	Afrikaans	Tertiary (Post-Graduate)	Higher Education	Public	4-6 years
F	26-30	Single	Xhosa	Tertiary (Post-Graduate)	Higher Education	Public	1-3 years
F	46-50	Married	Zulu	Tertiary	Education (Finance)	Private	7-9 years
M	46-50	Single	Xhosa	Tertiary	Higher Education	Public	4-6 years
M	46-50	Married	Sotho	Tertiary	Further Education	Private	7-9 years
M	31-35	Married	Xhosa	Tertiary (Post-Graduate)	Manufacturing(Finance)	Private	1-3 years
M	46-50	Married	Xhosa	Tertiary (Post-Graduate)	Higher Education	Public	1-3 years

As mentioned previously, the gender distribution of the study was 4 males and 4 females. The majority of the participants were in the age group 46 – 50 years. Two participants were between 31 – 35 years of age while there was one participant representing the age group 26 – 30 years and one in the 36 – 40 year old group.

There was an equal distribution of participants being single or married. No-one indicated that they were co-habiting or in a partnership. The majority of the females (n=3) were single whilst the majority of the males (n=3) were married.

The majority of participants were Xhosa speaking (n=5). One participant was Sotho speaking and another one spoke Zulu. One of the participants indicated that Afrikaans was the first language. Since it was also the researcher's first language, it was decided for

reliability purposes to conduct that particular interview in English in order to ensure that it was the second language for both parties involved as for the other interviews conducted.

Participants were asked to indicate their educational level. The majority of the participants (n=5) were educated on a post-graduate level while the remainder of the group were educated to tertiary level. There were no participants with only secondary training.

The industries represented in the study consisted mainly of education. A distinction was made between further education, higher education and education in general. Education in general represents any other organisation associated with educating students which does not fall within the criteria of further or higher education. In the study, half of the participants work in higher education (n=4) while one works in general education. Two participants are employed in further education while one participant works within the manufacturing industry. The job sectors represented within the study is mainly public of nature (n=5). Public sector represents any organisation that receives public funding. Three participants work in the private sector.

Finally, job tenure is defined as the period an employee has with a company at the time of data collection. Any service period indicated not as a full year but more than six months, was rounded off to the next year. The majority of participants have been employed in their current organisation between 1 and 3 years (n=4). Two employees have worked at their organisation for 4 to 6 years and two employees have been employed for 7 to 9 years.

### **4.3 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

Data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with all the participants. An interview guide was developed with open-ended questions in order to obtain qualitative data. The interviews were conducted telephonically and recorded for later analysis.

#### **4.3.1 The interview as a research technique**

Within the data collection stage, Willig (2001) argues that investigators need to concern themselves with the type of data they want to collect and the role of the participants in the particular research process. It is pointed out that data collected in a qualitative investigation should be as natural as possible, meaning that it should not be coded or minimised in any form. The main emphasis therefore is to develop a detailed record of the participants'

responses, that is words and possible non-verbal cues. One of the most common data collection techniques used in qualitative investigations, is the use of interviews.

According to Silverman (2006), there are three different approaches to interview data. One version resembles positivism by investigating facts about certain behaviours and attitudes. Normally this approach will consider methods such as random samples, standardised questions and possibly tabulations. The main assumption is that this approach focuses on creating statistical logical interview data that could lead to specific facts about certain behaviours or attitudes.

Emotionalism implies a focus on the actual experiences of interviewees. Contrary to positivism, emotionalism attempts to create an opportunity for open and uninterrupted communication between interviewee and interviewer (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). In this approach, the researcher attempts to establish a relationship with interviewees without manipulating them. Deviation from an interview guide or schedule will therefore be acceptable to emotionalists whilst being viewed as a potential source of bias by positivists (Oakley, 1981).

In the present study, the third approach, constructionism, was used where the status of data is viewed as being mutually constructed by interviewer and interviewee. Constructionists aim to define and treat the interaction between interviewer and interviewee as a specific topic on its own – not merely a possible limiting variable that could stand in the way of understanding the interviewee's experiences (Silverman, 2006). In the current investigation, the constructivist nature of the interview was enhanced by the open-ended questions being asked. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on statements and the researcher, with the help of the participant, joined in a mutual interaction with the data.

Interviews highlight the fact that qualitative methodologies are different in the way they affirm the role and impact of language and the importance placed on reflexivity in the research process (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). Two possible ways to enhance reflexivity is by means of individual or epistemological methods. Within the individual paradigm the investigator attempts to question his or her set of values, beliefs and so forth with regards to its potential impact on the research process. From an epistemological perspective the emphasis is placed on findings and assumptions associated with the different steps in the research process. In other words, the investigator analyses the impact of such assumptions and any other alternative ways to investigate the chosen phenomenon (Willig, 2001). Both these approaches were used in the present investigation. Fairclough (1995) points out that

the awareness of language and its potential impact on the research process could form part of reflexivity. Willig (2001) supports this and argues that language has a creative or constructive capacity which could highlight and create meanings of certain experiences when shared with the researcher. The words participants use will therefore create the meanings of certain experiences.

#### **4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews**

Within the qualitative paradigm, the main purpose of the investigator is to establish a rapport with the participant. The researcher will have an idea of the topics and areas of interest to pursue, but simultaneously, it is an expectation to attempt an understanding of the psychological and social worlds of the participant. It is therefore only natural for the participant to participate in the direction of the discourse (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Therefore, Tuttery, Rotnery and Grinnell (1996) encourage the use of the semi-structured interview since it gives the interviewer the opportunity to learn from participants' life experiences.

Willig (2001) points out that IPA and semi-structured interviews complement each other since the interviewer tries to personally experience the views of the participant, and therefore needs open-ended questions which are non-directive to reach the goal. Smith et al. (2009) claim that semi-structured interviews contribute to detailed stories which inevitably lead to richer detail in the discourse. It is claimed that these interviews are appropriate since participants are given the opportunity to speak, think and be heard at their leisure. In this investigation, data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The main questions were constructed, such as '*What is your opinion about affirmative action*' or '*Can you describe the role of your supervisor in your job*'. However, the investigator remained open to the participants' reactions by allowing them to venture into areas not directly relevant to the questions. This gave the investigator valuable insight into not only the participants' face value experiences at work, but the deeper rooted psychological and socio-historical variables influencing their personal perceptions and lived experiences.

#### **4.3.3 The interview guide**

In order to prepare for the further development of interview techniques and the considerations needed in preparing an interview guide, the researcher attended a course in interview techniques at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the

course was to prepare researchers and interviewers in the finer detail needed to conduct successful semi-structured interviews. Consequently, training was also received in the development of the interview guide.

In the initial phase of preparing the interview guide, the researcher normally decides on the main questions to be included in the interview. Rubin and Rubin (2005) define these main questions as the so-called 'scaffolding' of the interview. Main questions are the primary motivators to participants to share their views in a non-threatening conversation with the researcher. Although there are no clear rules of how many main questions to prepare, it is normally argued that half a dozen should be suitable for the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). When conducting the interview, Willig (2001) is of opinion that researchers should start with the more general question and then move towards more personal matters. This will encourage participants to contribute and reflect upon aspects important to the research aim and objectives.

The initial prompts for the questions were found in the literature when investigating the theories and models of job satisfaction as well as studying the impact of gender and culture on job satisfaction. Secondly, the researcher had to ensure that the meaning of the question would be the same for all participants. As a result, it will also be noted that the language used in the questions were simplistic in nature and often the interviewees lacked the linguistic finesse to elaborate significantly on comments since interviews were conducted with respondents who communicated in their second language.

In the current investigation, it was decided to use the main criteria of the Job Satisfaction Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) as a guide for the development of the main questions in the interview guide. The justification (see Chapter 2 for a detailed theoretical justification of this decision) was that the JDI is one of the most well-known quantitative research instruments measuring job satisfaction. Smith et al. (1969) clearly indicate that the main aim with the JDI is to investigate and study situations, personal characteristics and policies towards both satisfaction and behaviour. The main requirement of the JDI was that the questions should be applicable to a wide variety of people in a wide variety of jobs. However, as Krossa (1996) criticised the JDI for failing to consider the impact of both culture and identity within the work environment, it was decided to add questions related to cultural, racial and political differences.



Examples of the questions added to the interview guide were ‘*In which ways does the organisation encourage diversity?*’; ‘*What are your opinions about affirmative action;*’ and ‘*Explain the importance of your culture in your job*’.

The following main questions were finally included in the interview guide:

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Take me through your typical routine at work.
- Why did you go into this field of work?
- Please identify anything during the day that you particularly enjoy.
- Please describe your relationship with your supervisor in the time you’ve been here.
- Please tell me about the ways the organisation acknowledges your efforts at work.
- How would you describe the role of your co-workers in your job?
- In which ways does the organisation encourage diversity?
- What are your opinions about affirmative action?
- Explain the importance of your culture in your job.

The particular order of the questions was chosen since the aim was to start with the more general, non-threatening questions, moving towards the more personal matters. In this investigation, the first three questions were viewed as a general introduction into the investigation and an attempt by the interviewer to understand the circumstances surrounding the participants’ current and past lived experiences.

Within the interview guide, the researcher included descriptive questions where participants had to give a general overview of what had happened. Structural questions were included to place more emphasis on how the participants made sense of their thoughts. Contrast questions were included to encourage the participants to compare certain events and perceptions and finally, evaluative questions guided the respondents towards their own personal feelings regarding job satisfaction (Spradley, 1979).

**Table 4.2      Types of questions included in the interview guide**

Please tell me a little bit about yourself.	Descriptive
Take me through your typical day at work.	Descriptive

Why did you get into this field of work?	Structural
Please identify anything during the day that you particularly enjoy.	Structural and Contrast
Please describe the relationship with your supervisor in the time you've been here.	Contrast and Evaluation
Please tell me about the ways the organisation acknowledges your efforts at work.	Contrast and Evaluation
How would you describe the role of your co-workers in your job?	Contrast and Evaluation
In which way does the organisation encourage diversity?	Contrast and Evaluation
What are your opinions about affirmative action?	Contrast and Evaluation
Explain the importance of your culture in your job.	Contrast and Evaluation

#### 4.3.4 Conducting and recording interviews

Smith (2004) mentions that IPA researchers are confronted with the question whether to record the interview or not. The author is of the opinion that it is a necessity in IPA research to record interviews since no researcher has the ability to write every utterance down. By attempting that, the danger is that certain importance nuances will be missed.

Since the level of transcription for IPA is primarily on the semantic level, it is not necessary to mention any non-verbal cues or behaviour as required by conversation analysis (Smith, 2004).

According to Smith et al. (2009) various methods of data collection can be considered. This includes postal questionnaires, electronic e-mail dialogues, focus groups and observational methods. It was decided in this study, due to the researcher residing in the UK, to conduct telephonic semi-structured interviews with participants at a time convenient to them. The decision was deemed appropriate for the current investigation since IPA requires a transcript of notable utterances such as sighs, laughter and hesitation, but no indication of body language and facial expressions.

Participants were contacted at a time convenient to them. The majority of the participants (n=6) preferred being interviewed during working hours. The telephonic interviews took

place during a time convenient to them, and not during lunch hour. Two participants preferred being interviewed after hours at their homes. All participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded.

Another aspect important to the interview process was to determine how long such interviews should be. Smith et al. (2009) are of opinion that IPA interviews tend to be 45 minutes to 90 minutes of conversation. In the current investigation, the mean time for interviews was approximately 45 minutes. It is acknowledged at this stage that the limited linguistic abilities of participants were significant in their inability to give more detailed accounts of certain concepts. Consequently, the researcher decided to interview eight, rather than six participants, as suggested by Smith (2004). This aspect will be discussed in more depth and detail in Section 4.6.1 when referring to the challenges of cross-cultural research.

#### **4.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

In this section, the researcher discusses the data analysis and data interpretation concepts. The theoretical approaches and models adopted in the previous chapters served as the basis for a closer examination of the factors associated with work satisfaction among middle level managers. Not only were the determinants of job satisfaction acknowledged in the analysis and interpretation, but the researcher, as co-interpreter in the double hermeneutical process acknowledged the role of gender and culture in the discourse analysis. The data was tackled from a social constructionist approach which, as explained in Chapter 1, acknowledges that individuals seek understanding regarding the world they live and work in. Due to the subjective nature, the researcher acknowledged the multi-layered nature of the meanings of such experiences and therefore, as illustrated below, an attempt was made to investigate the complexity of different views, rather than narrowing meanings into small categories (Creswell, 2009). IPA was used to analyse the discourse and consequent meanings of utterances. Finally, an explanation of the discussion of the framework adopted to explain the findings concludes the section. This is illustrated by a worked example of how the analysis is presented in Chapter 5. Extracts discussed in Chapter 5 were chosen for their content in order to illustrate the complexity of meaning and the double hermeneutic process of not only the participants attempting to make sense of lived experiences, but the researcher's attempt to interpret those experiences.

#### **4.4.1 Analysis and interpretation of data: an overview**

It is clear that the main aim of data analysis is to develop insight and understanding into the process. It is, in other words, helping the researcher to order information (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This notion is supported by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) who believe that data analysis helps the researcher to understand the phenomena and clarify any potential problems in order to answer the research question. Data analysis is therefore the process of dividing the information into manageable units of understanding in order to identify potential themes, patterns and relationships (Mouton, 2001).

Interpretation, thereafter, is associated with the process of organising the data into larger, understandable units of information. The next logical step would be for the researcher to compare his or her understanding of the data with existing theoretical frameworks or models. The researcher then highlights similarities and differences to other existing viewpoints regarding the chosen phenomena (Mouton, 2001).

From an IPA perspective, the researcher is mainly interested in the living world of the participant. The meaning of the events within this psychological world is of main interest to the researcher. It is therefore required of the researcher to develop an interpretative relationship with the transcribed text (Smith, 2004). Smith et al. (2009) point out that the main focus remains the content of the participants' accounts. Therefore it does not require a fully detailed version of the conversation, in other words, it does not require exact indications of pauses, or of non-verbal utterances. It is argued that in the case of IPA, it is seen as ineffective and makes no sense to transcribe information that will not be analysed at any stage (O'Connell & Kowal, 1995). It is, however, acknowledged that there are some interactions that could be useful to transcribe. IPA requires a linguistic record of the conversation which will include all words that have been spoken by everyone during the interview process (Smith et al., 2009).

#### **4.4.2 Data transcription**

Any data collected via an interview is recorded. Since IPA's main aim is to interpret the meaning of utterances, it is therefore not necessary to include a detailed description of all aspects of the recording. In other words, the researcher is not required to produce a record of all non-verbal utterances or the exact lengths of pauses as required by conversational analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Essentially, IPA requires a semantic record of the

interview – a transcription of all utterances. It is expected to include a note on notable non-verbal utterances (laughter), significant pauses or hesitations (by using bracketed text in capitals) (Smith et al., 2009)

An example of a short piece of transcript is included below:

**Table 4.3 Transcript example**

I: Hmm...what about any particular things that you do on a daily basis ?

R: [pause] It's difficult, as I say, it depends on the time of the month. The days look pretty similar actually..[laughing]. I do have management meetings to attend and I work closely with my colleagues, so I am normally at my desk and close production and doing analysis and.. write reports [pause] hmm...I have a lunch hour every day you know ...and as I say regular meetings, but that is basically what I do at work [pause] the fact is ... I I mean..here you got to be in at 8.

I: Yes..

R: You are being watched over..you close after 5. You know [sighs] there is not a lot of flexibility...

#### **4.4.3 Analysis of data**

IPA's analytical focus draws the analyst to the participants' need to make sense of their unique experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In general, the main steps an IPA researcher will follow in the data analysis process will be the reading and then re-reading of the text. General notes would be appropriate at this stage of the analysis. Secondly, the researcher should identify and label themes that are reflected in each section of the text. These themes are recorded in the right margin of the transcribed text. Willig (2001) is of opinion that psychological terminology is allowed at this stage of the process. Next, units of meaningful data are then classified by means of categorisation. Categorisation could be explained as identifying a chunk of the unit that belongs to a certain part of the chosen phenomenon (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

Although there is no definitive account of how IPA analysis should take place, there are some common practises and principles involved. The following strategies were employed by the researcher:

**Table 4.4 Heuristic strategies employed in IPA data analysis**

<b>Step 1:</b> Conducting an in-depth line-by-line analysis of the concerns, understandings and claims of each participant.
<b>Step 2:</b> Identification of developing themes or patterns whilst emphasising convergence, divergence, aspects of commonality and nuance. This approach is then applied across multiple interviews.
<b>Step 3:</b> A more interpretive account follows with a dialogue between the researcher, the coded data and the researcher’s psychological knowledge.
<b>Step 4:</b> A gestalt or holistic framework is developed to illustrate the relationships between different themes.
<b>Step 5:</b> The material is organised in a format which simplifies the process of the analysed data. This is linked to the initial transcript comments, clustering, and the final structure of themes.
<b>Step 6:</b> The interpretation’s coherence, reliability and validity are tested by means of supervision, collaboration or auditing.
<b>Step 7:</b> A full narrative follows which is supported by detailed commentary on data extracts. The purpose is to guide the reader through the interpretation, theme by theme. A visual guide such as a table or diagram usually accompanies this section.
<b>Step 8:</b> Reflective phase on the researcher’s own perceptions, processes and understanding.

(Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009)

It is highlighted by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) that the route followed by the analyst should not be linear, but rather a reactive process in the hermeneutical circle of analysis and interpretation. It is important to remember that although the main interest of IPA remains the personal lived experiences of participants and the consequential meaning the participants make of such experiences, the final step always needs to be the double hermeneutics – the report of how the analyst thinks the participant is thinking.

The following section will entail a detailed description of steps 1 and 2 with reference to an interview completed in the investigation.

After the interview content was read and re-read, the next step was the initial noting. This is the most detailed step in the analysis process. The purpose of this stage is to examine the semantic content and language used in an inductive manner. According to Smith et al. (2009) there are no specific rules at this stage. The aim remains to produce a thorough set of detailed notes on the data. As seen with the data analysis, it is inevitable that some parts of the data will be richer and will necessitate more detailed descriptions and notes than other parts. The core focus remains the descriptive notes which has a phenomenological flavour and is required to remain close to the participant's true meaning and intention. Following from this, is the ability to highlight the meanings of participant comments which will follow logically into the interpretative notings helping the analyst to understand the participants' concerns and comments in fuller depth and detail. This process requires the analyst to look closely at the language used, accepting and acknowledging the context of the lived experience and finally, being able to identify and interpret the more abstract character of the utterances (Smith et al., 2009).

Firstly the descriptive comments were identified. These comments described the context of what the participants discussed and highlighted the subject of the discussion within the transcript.

The following extract illustrates the identification and development of descriptive comments:

**Table 4.5 Illustration of descriptive comments in the text**

<p>R: I've always had a passion for accounting. I guess my tutor was really good you know... uh..uh...from our history...uh about studying in the townships.... we did not have any career counselling..and my tutor managed to keep me interested in the subject....and that is really good if you think of our history....</p> <p>I: Can you explain?</p>	<p>Passion for accounting. Good tutor had an impact. Reference to lack of career counselling due to historical variables.</p> <p>Reference to political history.</p>
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<p>R: You know, many students were not so interested in studying back then....or they could not afford to or .....maybe they thought they won't be able to do it.... and we did not have anybody telling us how it works or what to do... many of these things we had to find out for ourselves..</p> <p>I: Uhm...</p> <p>R: So when you chose subjects you know you choose subject that are familiar. You teach yourself....</p> <p>I: Hm...</p> <p>R: You know you go to the library and look for yourself.</p>	<p>Reference to childhood.</p> <p>Makes own life choice with reference to career.</p> <p>Library where he found out about his chosen career.</p>
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Linguistic analysis is primarily focused on the exploration of the use of language by the participant. During this phase, the researcher looked at aspects such as the use of repetition, metaphor, pronouns, pauses and laughter. Often the more explicit claims lead to the development of conceptual meanings (Smith et al., 2009).

The next table highlights the linguistic comments in italics annotated in an extract of the interview.

**Table 4.6 Illustration of linguistic comments**

<p>R: I've always had a passion for accounting. I guess my tutor was really good you know...uh..uh...from our history...uh about studying in</p>	<p>Passion for accounting. Good tutor had an impact. Reference to lack of career counselling due to historical variables.</p> <p><i>Hesitant repetitions (uh uh uh).</i></p> <p><i>Leaving sentence in open – emphasising aspects of life in the townships. Does not sound keen to elaborate.</i></p>
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<p>the townships.... we did not have any career counselling..and my tutor managed to keep me interested in the subject....and that is really good if you think of our history....</p>	<p>Reference to political history. <i>Repeating impact of history. A repetitive focus.</i></p>
<p>I: Can you explain?</p>	
<p>R: You know, many students were not so interested in studying back then....or they could not afford to or .....maybe they thought they won't be able to do it.... and we did not have anybody telling us how it works or what to do... many of these things we had to find out for ourselves..</p>	<p>Reference to childhood. <i>Pauses. Reflecting back in time? Recalling events and circumstances?</i></p>
<p>I: Uhm...</p>	
<p>R: So when you chose subjects you know you choose subject that are familiar. You teach yourself....</p>	<p>Make own life choice with reference to career. <i>Clear sense of being evasive but equally emphasising the reality of the experience. Manner of addressing interviewer. Assuming understanding?</i></p>
<p>I: Hm...</p>	
<p>R: You know you go to the library and look for yourself.</p>	<p>Library where he found out about his chosen career.</p>

The final step during the initial noting was to refer to the conceptual comments in the text. Smith et al. (2009) argue that this phase often has an interrogative character since, especially in the earlier phases of analysis when there is not yet a holistic overview, features of the participants' accounts could lead to further questions. This phase expects the analyst to move away from the explicit claims of the participant to a more holistic approach in order to understand the participant. During this stage, there are often also aspects of personal experiences and reflection involved where the analyst draws on personal and professional knowledge when annotating the text. For example, in Table 4.7 the participant refers to his personal history by describing growing up in townships and the role of his tutor in motivating

him. The conversation then follows to the experiences of black students during those years. On a conceptual level, the researcher considered the role of education and black youths during the years when the participant was educated. Having personally lived in an environment which had close links with events in townships during those years as well as being educated in history enriched my understanding of the role of education in townships in the 1990s. Therefore conceptual questions could be asked about black secondary education, the use of the collective in his account as well as referring to the personal experiences of black youths during those years.

**Table 4.7 Illustration of conceptual comments**

<p>R: I've always had a passion for accounting. I guess my tutor was really good you know... uh..uh...from our history...uh about studying in the townships.... we did not have any career counselling..and my tutor managed to keep me interested in the subject....and that is really good if you think of our history....</p> <p>I: Can you explain?</p> <p>R: You know, many students were not so interested in studying back then....or they could not afford to or .....maybe they thought they won't be able to do it.... and we did not have anybody telling us how it works or what to do... many of these things we had to find out for ourselves..</p> <p>I: Uhm...</p>	<p>Passion for accounting. Good tutor had an impact. Reference to lack of career counselling due to historical variables.</p> <p><i>Hesitant repetitions (uh uh uh).</i></p> <p><i>Leaving sentence in open – emphasising aspects of life in the townships. Does not sound keen to elaborate.</i></p> <p><u>He reluctantly brings in their history. Interestingly using the collective here. Is he scared to put himself in the centre of attention? Is it safer to refer to the whole group?</u></p> <p>Reference to political history. <i>Repeating impact of history. A repetitive focus. He sounds proud of his tutor's ability to keep him interested. Is there a lack of self-esteem when referring to teachers in black secondary schools?</i></p> <p><u>Historical and cultural reflection of the black youths? He was a youth during the political transitional period. Did the black youths see no way forward or did they believe that they wouldn't be able to succeed in tertiary education?</u></p> <p>Reference to childhood.</p> <p><i>Pauses. Reflecting back in time? Recalling events and circumstances?</i></p> <p><u>The impact of the lack of guidance and support for black youths are highlighted. Is the fact that they – or he – had to find out for themselves, a possible reason why he has such explicit standards in the work environment? Is he suggesting that he had to fight for himself and therefore he expects an agreeable work environment as a result of that struggle?</u></p>
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<p>R: So when you chose subjects you know you choose subject that are familiar. You teach yourself....</p> <p>I: Hm...</p> <p>R: You know you go to the library and look for yourself.</p>	<p><u>He highlights being on his own with his career choices. You either choose something familiar or you are forced to teach yourself.</u></p> <p>Make own life choice with reference to career.</p> <p><i>Clear sense of being evasive but equally emphasising the reality of the experience. Manner of addressing interviewer. Assuming understanding?</i></p> <p>Library where he found out about his chosen career.</p>
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The conceptual phase of analysis encourages a dialogue between the researcher's own pre-understanding and newly developed understanding of the participants' worlds. It remains important at this stage to link all interpretation to the text and that the focus remains on the participant and not the analyst (Smith et al., 2009).

After completing the initial noting, the next step was to develop emergent themes. The main task of the analyst now is to reduce the volume of data, but simultaneously retain the complexity of the data. This is the stage where interrelationships, connections and patterns between exploratory notes are highlighted. The primary shift is to work with the initial noting rather than the transcript itself whilst the interview becomes a set of the parts. Effectively, there should be synergy between description and interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The following extract provides an example of the development of themes in the interview data:

**Table 4.8 The development of themes**

<p>The individual opposed to the group</p> <p>Role of tutor</p>	<p>R: I've always had a passion for accounting. I guess my tutor was really good you know... uh..uh...from our history...uh about studying in the townships.... we did not have any career counselling..and my tutor managed</p>	<p>Passion for accounting. Good tutor had an impact.</p> <p>Reference to lack of career counselling due to historical variables.</p> <p><i>Hesitant repetitions (uh uh uh).</i></p> <p><i>Leaving sentence in open – emphasising aspects of life in the townships. Does not sound keen to elaborate.</i></p> <p><u>He reluctantly brings in their history. Interestingly using the collective here. Is he scared to put himself in the centre of attention? Is it safer to refer to the whole group?</u></p>
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<p>Being a youth and its impact</p>	<p>to keep me interested in the subject....and that is really good if you think of our history....</p> <p>I: Can you explain?</p> <p>R: You know, many students were not so interested in studying back then....or they could not afford to or .....maybe they thought they won't be able to do it.... and we did not have anybody telling us how it works or what to do... many of these things we had to find out for ourselves..</p>	<p>Reference to political history. <i>Repeating impact of history. A repetitive focus. He sounds proud of his tutor's ability to keep him interested. Is there a lack of self-esteem when referring to teachers in black secondary schools?</i></p> <p><u>Historical and cultural reflection of the black youths? He was a youth during the political transitional period. Did the black youths see no way forward or did they believe that they wouldn't be able to succeed in tertiary education?</u></p> <p>Reference to childhood. <i>Pauses. Reflecting back in time? Recalling events and circumstances?</i></p> <p><u>The impact of the lack of guidance and support for black youths are being highlighted. Is the fact that they – or he – had to find out for themselves, a possible reason why he has such explicit standards in the work environment? Is he suggesting that he had to fight for himself and therefore he expects an agreeable work environment as a result of that struggle?</u></p>
<p>The self alone in choices</p>	<p>I: Uhm...</p> <p>R: So when you chose subjects you know you choose subject that are familiar. You teach yourself....</p> <p>I: Hm...</p> <p>R: You know you go to the library and look for yourself.</p>	<p><u>He highlights being on his own with his career choices. You either choose something familiar or you are forced to teach yourself.</u></p> <p>Make own life choice with reference to career. <i>Clear sense of being evasive but equally emphasising the reality of the experience. Manner of addressing interviewer. Assuming understanding?</i></p> <p>Library where he found out about his chosen career.</p>

Following from the development of the emergent themes, the analyst attempts to search for connections between the themes. The process entails 'charting' or 'mapping out' how the themes link with each other. Smith et al. (2009) point out that it is inevitable that some themes will not necessarily be included at this stage since it is dependent on the relevance to the research question.

There are various methods to consider when looking for patterns and connections between emergent themes. Smith et al. (2009) highlight that these methods are not mutually exclusive and that the researcher needs to consider methods that are applicable to his or her particular study. The process of placing themes together creates 'super-ordinate' themes. In the current investigation, the researcher employed the following methods in order to develop super-ordinate themes:

Abstraction involves placing similar themes together and developing a new name for the cluster. Themes are grouped together under super-ordinate theme titles (Smith et al., 2009). An example in the research of a super-ordinate theme was the impact of supervision on the participants' perception of job satisfaction. The researcher also used contextualisation as a method of identifying patterns and connections. This method acknowledges the contextual or narrative elements within the transcript (Smith et al., 2009). Examples of such themes could be temporal, narrative or cultural themes. An example of a temporal theme is the perception of autonomy as voiced by a participant. Significant moments and examples in his work history enforced his perception of the importance of independence and flexibility in the workplace. Such comments include his reference to the choice to arrive or leave work at a chosen time and the freedom experienced in having a choice which creates the perception of an independent work environment. Finally, the researcher used numeration as a supportive method in the data analysis. This method acknowledges the frequency with which a specific theme is supported. Smith et al. (2009) warns that this method should not be enunciated, but it could be one way of indicating the relative significance of emergent and super-ordinate themes. An example in the data of numeration was where a participant mentioned the impact of role conflict on seven occasions. Similarly, it was also considered how many participants mentioned a specific aspect such as the positive contribution of their supervisor in their work experience.

The following table illustrates an example of themes and the development of super-ordinate themes.

**Table 4.9 Example of super-ordinate and emergent themes**

Themes	Page/line	Key Words
<i>Personal history and its impact</i>		
Personal history's impact	9/2	Our history
Being a youth and its impact	9/8	Back then
The self alone in choices	9/17	You teach yourself
Past was hard	13/4	Walk around look for jobs
<i>Importance of culture in the workplace</i>		
Personal uncertainty about role of culture in workplace	29/8	Quite a way to go but is a platform
Positive consequence of cultural understanding	29/12	Work more closely together
<i>Importance of autonomy</i>		
Work expectations embedded in independent approach	3/7	As long as you finish your work
USA job positive due to flexitime	3/11	It was good to come to work later
Independent work environment with clear expectations	3/15	You have the freedom to choose

After the first interview was completed, the process was repeated with the remaining seven transcribed interviews. In line with IPA's ideographic character, the researcher should view each case on its own merits and unique character. As far as possible, the analyst should aim to focus on the interview at hand whilst isolating emergent themes from previous interviews (Smith et al., 2009).

The final step required the researcher to look for patterns across the individual cases. The researcher was expected to identify any connections across cases, decide which themes were more dominant than others or determine how specific themes in a case could highlight another theme in other cases (Smith et al., 2009).

#### **4.4.4 Interpretation and explanation of data**

According to Willig (2001), the following step is to attempt to use some more structure in the analysis. The super-ordinate themes are listed and the researcher starts to think about them in relation to other identified themes. It is argued that some themes would automatically form clusters whilst other will display a form of levelled relationship with each other. The final step is to develop a table of the structured themes that includes quotes that effectively illustrate each theme. It is important at this stage that the summary table should only recognise themes that reflect the participants' experience of the phenomena. Consequently

the researcher would have identified specific aspects that could contribute to the discussion of the results found in the exploratory investigation.

The following table illustrates the super-ordinate themes identified in the interviews:

**Table 4.10 An example of the super-ordinate themes identified in the sample**

Comparison with other work environments
Experiences of role conflict
Impact of communication in the workplace
Impact of race
Impact of supervision
Impact of work on family life
Importance of acknowledgement of abilities
Importance of autonomy
Importance of culture in the workplace
Job expectancies
Lack of trust
Management style of self and others
Organisational policies and procedures
Personal history and its impact
Personal skills in the workplace
Personal values
Rewards or recognition programmes
Role of affirmative action
Role of co-workers at work
Role of personality
Self-reflection
Socio-economic or political worlds
Work activities
Working conditions

Table 4.11 illustrates the identification of recurrent themes in the data analysis process. Super-ordinate themes associated with the majority of respondents can lead to the development of main themes derived from the interview data. It is important to note that the recurrence of themes are not limited to a specific method or requirement but rather associated with the depth of comments and themes identified during analysis. Smith et al. (2009) are of the opinion that the strength and importance of super-ordinate themes are linked to the researcher’s level of interpretation – whether it is viewed as a broad or specific concept. Another important reminder is that participants will manifest certain super-ordinate themes in other themes. Also, the super-ordinate theme may look different across the respondents. Smith et al. (2009) therefore argue that the researcher is constantly involved in a negotiation process between a need for common themes as opposed to the acknowledgement of individuality in comments.

**Table 4.11 Example of identification of recurrent themes**

Super-ordinate themes	M1	M2	M3	M4	F5	F6	F7	F8	Present over half the sample?
Socio-political impact on career experiences	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Yes
Competency associated with qualifications and skills	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Yes
Need for culture to be understood	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Yes

A final step in the analysis of the interviews is to identify the main themes evolving from the recurrent super-ordinate themes. It has been decided that super-ordinate themes occurring in over half of respondent comments, will be considered as sub-themes. From the sub-themes, five main themes emerged, namely:

- Supervisor
- Co-workers
- Autonomy
- Recognition
- Personal development



#### **4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Willig (2001), one could assume that similar ethical guidelines will be applicable to both quantitative and qualitative research projects. This includes considerations such as informed consent, where the participants are informed about the research procedures as well as exactly what is expected of them. Clearly no deception should be allowed with regard to the true nature of the study. It also needs to be communicated to the participants that they have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process without fearing any consequences. After the data has been collected, the researcher needs to debrief participants, once again highlighting the main aims of the research project as well as answering any other additional questions the participants might still have. In addition, the researcher also has the responsibility to ensure confidentiality at all cost. This once again should be clearly communicated to the participants involved.

In the current investigation, all respondents' participation was voluntary. The researcher clarified the aim of the research project when participants were recruited. The reasons for conducting an interview as opposed to using a quantitative measuring instrument, was explained to participants. Before conducting the interview, participants gave permission for interviews to be recorded and it was once again emphasised that they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. It was also highlighted that their data was viewed as confidential. Participants were assured of not only their own anonymity, but also that of the organisations they represent. Therefore, it is noted that no information in the interviews regarding where participants grew up, which schools or universities they attended or additional revealing information were included in the interview data.

In order to attempt to create such an unbiased research environment, the researcher presented herself and her personal history and her interest in the subject to the participants. It is acknowledged that a white Afrikaans speaking female conducted the interviews and the possible historical, political or socio-economic biases had to be acknowledged and addressed as far as possible.

#### **4.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY**

It was acknowledged that the methodology faced certain challenges. Conducting interviews across cultures placed emphasis on the role of language and the ability of participants to express themselves appropriately. The language barrier therefore influenced the spoken

word and the ability to elaborate on certain concepts in the interview. The biased nature of qualitative methodologies is highlighted by the subjective role of the researcher in the data collection and analysis process.

#### **4.6.1 Interviewing across cultures**

Dunbar, Rodriguez and Parker (2002) point out that so-called 'standardised practices' within interviewing are normally suspect when dealing with subjects chosen on non-standardised grounds, such as race. They furthermore argue that the phenomenon of race is based on its role as social construct – either as part of a colour-blind discourse or alternatively as a more critical racial viewpoint. This poses challenges for any researcher interested in topics related to race in some form or another.

In order to address this issue, it is therefore important that any form of cross-cultural interviewing should be assisted by ethnographic knowledge of that particular culture. Especially the role of communication within the chosen culture will be of essence. It is assumed that not only cultural language used by interviewees, but also potential language barriers between researcher and participant, could have an impact on the conclusions derived from the communication process. It is, however, acknowledged that a researcher entering the field of cross-cultural research will have limited knowledge and experience about that particular culture and should take that into consideration when analysing results (Dunbar et al., 2002).

It is therefore clear that cultural factors have an impact on the relationship between researcher and participant. Research outcomes are affected by variables such the role and impact of language, levels of understanding as well as the level of motivation of the participant. Mutual understanding and respect develop when the researcher acknowledges differences in cultural values and behaviour that could impact the interview process (Keats, 2000).

Language issues can have a significant impact on the research process. It is expected that issues such as vocabulary, syntax and register will inevitably arise when the language of the researcher differs from that of the participant. However, communication problems can also be potentially prevalent when similar language is used but the cultural background of both role players differs. Issues can arise specifically in the use of non-verbal communication and in the interpretation process of unintentional meaning of words (Keats, 2000). Therefore the researcher must take special care and consideration in acknowledging these as potential

issues. In the current investigation, both language and cultural barriers are acknowledged since interviews were conducted in English, the second language of both researcher and participants. There are also clear cultural and gender influences since the researcher is a white female conducting interviews with black males and females.

#### **4.6.2 The role of bias in qualitative research**

Dunbar et al. (2002) are of the opinion that the well-known insider-outsider problem is a general challenge to both cultural and non-cultural interviews in the way that the researcher (outsider) needs to build a rapport with the participant (insider). Within this process, it is clear that there is no quick solution in establishing the much needed in-depth relationship required to fully understand the perceptions and views of the interviewees. This problem is aggravated within cross-cultural research since rapport is established as a once off, therefore rather as a consequence of communication between researcher and interviewee. Since we are all also products of our social and historical backgrounds, we are even more prone to be uncomfortable with cross-cultural research (Ryen, 2002).

Therefore, the researcher needs to be aware of the subjective implications of administering interviews with racialised groups or populations. This awareness needs to be present throughout the whole research process. It is highlighted that, from a historical perspective, race has such a negative connotation, and therefore the researcher needs to take special care in nurturing the interview relationship between both interviewer and interviewee (Ryen, 2002).

Consequently Keats (2000) identifies different types of questions that could be seen as biased. It is clear that when a question is phrased in a specific manner in order to encourage a preferred response, it will be identified as biased. Similarly, a leading question will be viewed in the same way since it does not give the participant the opportunity to consider alternative answers. Clearly the ultimate source of bias is when the researcher poses questions which emphasise their unjust attitude towards the phenomenon being investigated. Rubin and Rubin (2005) rightly mention that the major concern in the interview process is when the researcher's feelings or biased attitudes, in some way or another, pervert what was actually heard. Therefore, in order to try and avoid bias, the researcher is encouraged to be open-minded and not to anticipate or guess any particular responses (Keats, 2000).

From a research perspective, the researcher must also acknowledge that even open ended questions could put one in a dilemma. Although it is proposed to lessen the possibility of bias, it still might not be the best way of obtaining the necessary information. However, the researcher can still consider open-ended questions to compensate and attempt to lessen bias during the data collection period (Easterbury-Smith et al., 1991). This current study included all above mentioned elements to be considered cautiously when conducting the investigation. The researcher attempted to consider and acknowledge all cultural and historical biases that could potentially affect the results.

#### **4.7 ESTABLISHING RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Assessing the quality of qualitative research is still a much debated topic. Current viewpoints are that the quality of qualitative research is clearly important, but the way in which it is assessed should differ from the way in which it is addressed in quantitative research (Statt, 2004). As Kirk and Miller (1986) point out, reliability and validity are terminology originally used in quantitative research procedures. Therefore it seems as if some researchers are not convinced to apply these positivistic concepts in an interpretivist research paradigm. However, aspects such as reliability and validity could be applicable or useful in the qualitative research methodology (Easterbury-Smith et al., 1991).

Yardley (2000) refers to three possible ways of assessing the quality of qualitative research. Firstly, it is highlighted that there needs to be an awareness or so-called sensitivity towards the context of the study. That implies that, in the current investigation, the researcher could for example be sensitive about how the socio-cultural or historical environment had an impact on the research process and participant responses. Secondly, Yardley (2000) points out that 'rigour, transparency and coherence' could lead to good quality qualitative research. This includes aspects such as selecting the appropriate sample, clearly highlighting the different stages of the study and to be transparent or open about writing up the findings. Finally, the importance and impact of the research is also valued. A main aspect of validity is whether the results are useful in the sense that it tells the reader something new about the chosen phenomena. Equally important is whether the results of the study could have a specific impact on for example, the social or historical environment of the chosen research phenomena.

As mentioned previously, another of the main evaluative aspects of quantitative data is reliability. Reliability could be defined as the ability to find the same answer if the research

process is repeated. Controversially it is often argued that qualitative researchers are not as concerned with reliability as their quantitative research counterparts might be. The reason for that is the fact that qualitative researchers could most possibly explore and investigate unique phenomena, or alternatively, use a method of obtaining data in much more detail (Willig, 2001). It will therefore be impossible to obtain similar results due to the unique qualities of the participants or the choice of data gathering techniques that could be applicable based on the epistemology and ontology of the research process.

From an interview perspective, reliability refers to the level of consistency the interviewer displays towards the interviewee. It is argued reliability within the interview could be obtained by repeating the interview later and finding the same results, or alternatively, investigating the possibility of using the same questions in different formats within the same interview and identifying similar answers (Keats, 2000). Strategies selected to contribute to reliability in the current investigation was to double-check the transcripts by an independent reader to ascertain whether any obvious mistakes were made in the transcription process. Inter-coder agreements were also established by working closely with a colleague when assessing and cross-checking the identified codes in the transcripts (Creswell, 2009).

Validity, on the other hand, is interested in how well the measuring instrument is assessing what it is supposed to. From an interview perspective, it is interested in whether the method of data gathering is actually producing the relevant information needed to answer the research questions (Keats, 2000).

Willig (2001) acknowledges that validity could be a challenge for qualitative investigators, but also concludes that there are potential ways in which researchers could address the issue. With regards to data collection, the participants do have the opportunity to question any aspect of it. The researchers could even present their findings to the participants for feedback. Validity is furthermore encouraged by the fact that the interviews will take place in a natural setting, such as an office, contributing to ecological validity. And finally, reflexivity will support the sense of evaluating the research process throughout, since the researcher needs to review his or her influence within this dynamic process continuously.

Krossa (1996), however, argues that what qualitative research achieves in validity, it unfortunately loses in reliability. It is argued that although field study offers us an in-depth analysis of a selected phenomenon, it is still characterised by personal perception and judgement. Consequently conclusions and judgements will differ from researcher to researcher.

In the current investigation, several strategies were employed to establish the validity of the investigation. The first phase was member checking where the specific descriptions of themes were sent back to participants to agree upon and to comment on. Creswell (2009) also mentions the importance of acknowledging and clarifying potential bias in the investigation. I did highlight sources of bias from the first phase of the interview process and communicated to interviewees my white background in South Africa. The reflective nature of this exercise - not only in the communication with interviewees, but also in the data analysis and discussion phases - contribute to a more transparent and open reflection of the interpretation of the data derived from the interviews. Creswell (2009) points out that the researcher should emphasise and not shy away from any contrary findings in the data. It is clear from the discussion in Chapter 5 that not only communal determinants of job satisfaction and job values were identified, but also contradicting findings from the data were highlighted and possible suggestions were made on reflection upon it.

## **Summary**

The chapter provided an overview of the methodology of the current investigation. Approaches to the analysis and interpretation of the data were preceded with a discussion of the research aims and questions, the sampling techniques and sample structure and the role of the semi-structured interview in the data collection procedures. The chapter concluded with reference to the acknowledgement of ethical guidelines and a critical evaluation of the possible limitations associated with the chosen methodology. Issues surrounding the reliability and validity of the research process were finally highlighted.

Chapter 5 presents the transcribed and analysed interview data obtained by means of interpretative phenomenological analysis.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE MANIFESTATION OF DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONGST BLACK MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS**

This section presents the results derived from semi-structured interviews with eight participants. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the interviews.

According to Smith, Flower and Larkin (2009), IPA is an approach in which the researcher attempts to identify how people make sense of their life experiences. The researcher is interested in the meanings individuals place on lived experiences and the analysis is therefore subjective in nature. Since the process involves a double hermeneutic, it is evident that the proposed themes are the result of the researcher's interpretation of the participants' interpretation of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). It is acknowledged that other researchers will be able to identify other master themes.

The main aims of the empirical investigation were:

- To identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction highlighted by black middle level managers.
- To investigate any qualitative differences in job satisfaction between male and female black middle level managers.
- To identify any afrocentric values of significant importance to the experience of job satisfaction among black middle level managers.

The qualitative data derived from the interviews were interpreted and form the basis of the identification of five master themes. These themes are supported by sub-dimensions that highlight the presence of dimensions of job satisfaction as acknowledged in literature. Some sub-themes illustrate the complexity of well-known dimensions of job satisfaction in the context of black workers.

Interviews with male and female participants were analysed and contextualised in order to form a deeper understanding of potential gender differences in the master themes. The basis of the analysis remained focused on the rich content and deeper meaning of comments made in the interviews.

The role and impact of culture were addressed by the identification of often complex interrelated factors mentioned by participants as important in their experience of their culture in their workplace. Due to the reciprocal influence of history and socio-economic variables on the lived experiences of participants, it was mentioned repeatedly in the different interviews. Therefore it was decided to address these factors in order to understand and contextualise the participants' lived experiences and their interpretation of life events.

## **5.1 DIMENSIONS OF JOB SATISFACTION**

The table below illustrates the master themes that were identified in the investigation into the sources of job satisfaction among black middle level managers. From the data analysis it is evident that these interpretations are complex and holistic in nature. As a result, findings show not only quantifiable variables associated with job satisfaction, but rather also a more interdependent character of past experiences, history and political changes influencing perceptions.

Since the major theories of job satisfaction guided the selection of the interview questions, the master themes identified were expected. All the content and process theories discussed in the literature were prevalent and could be associated with the master themes. Certain dimensions of job satisfaction as highlighted in the literature overview also supported some of the master themes. However, of interest remains the way in which the participants made sense of and perceived the master themes as illustrated in the identification of the sub-themes. In this investigation it is therefore argued that it is not necessarily the dimensions that are regarded as 'new', but rather the unique way in which these dimensions manifest for the selected subgroup.

With reference to the first research aim, the following master themes were deemed relevant:

- Supervisor
- Co-workers
- Autonomy
- Recognition
- Personal development



Table 5.1 illustrates the master themes emerging from the sub-themes.

**Table 5.1 Master Themes**

<b>Master Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>
Supervisor	Interpersonal relations
Co-workers	Language as barrier in the workplace
	Role of communication
Autonomy	Work environment
Recognition	Recognition of competency
	Affirmative action based on ability
Personal development	Working towards self-actualisation
	Importance of self-efficacy

### **5.1.1 Supervisor**

The supporting role of the supervisor and consequent positive relationship with employees were highlighted during the interviews. Participants made positive comments about the support and guidance received from their supervisor, but interestingly, since all of them are in middle management positions, some also mentioned behaviour they would not imitate and implement themselves. For example, some participants viewed the supervisor as a role model, a guide in the workplace and one participant even referred to her supervisor as a father-figure. Contrary to this, however, it was clear from the interviews that some participants did not enjoy such a positive working relationship. They highlighted some of the negative traits of their line manager and some suggested alternative managerial practices on how to guide staff members.

### 5.1.1.1 Interpersonal relations

A notable phenomenon in this main theme was the fact that middle managers commented on certain positive behavioural and personality traits of their supervisors and even suggested that imitation of such acceptable behaviours occurs in the workplace.

Within the work environment, it was clear that the expertise and knowledge of the supervisor were recognised and even admired.

*he understands ... he understands like the environment ... (Female 7)*

Although such an appreciation does not necessarily suggest a more personalised relationship with the supervisor, it was evident from conversations that a more personal relationship was valued and enjoyed by some middle level managers. It suggests that the supervisor is not necessarily viewed as an individual separated from co-workers by knowledge and experience, but somebody that has the ability to create opportunities for closer interpersonal relations in order to achieve certain outcomes in the workplace.

*I think that the director is immensely supportive and interested in what I am doing... (Female 6)*

*What I enjoy the most, like, my boss is a veeryyy kind person. In my post as such ... he's not just being a boss to me ... he's like a father ... (Female 7)*

*He, he is always a good nice man ... very supportive... (Male 2)*

*Ok, it's a ... how can I say ... it's a special, unique one... (Male 3)*

With the establishment of closer interpersonal ties, the opportunity is created to provide practical guidance on issues in the immediate work environment, but also to use such a relationship to communicate organisational expectations in a perhaps less threatening manner to workers. An interest in the developmental needs of the employee could therefore be strictly intrinsic in nature, but could also result in a different approach used by the supervisor to steer employees into a developmental path amalgamated with the organisational mission and vision.

*Sometimes you are said you must write a report when you are said you should write it in this manner. And then he was there to guide me on all those things ... (Female 7)*

*He tells you exactly what he needs from you ... (Male 2)*

*... and he wants me to be creative enough to ... to ... to I can go to workshops ... I can go to the conferences ... (Male 3)*

A central theme submerging from the interviews was the importance of communication within such a relationship with the supervisor. In order for the supervisor to be able to create opportunities of guidance and to make suggestions for further development and growth, an open communication channel between the two parties is deemed important in order to create a safe environment characterised by mutual respect and trust.

However, the importance of communication in the workplace does not stop with the middle level manager and supervisor, but is also evident in the supervisor's relationship with other co-workers on different levels in the organisation. Such qualities in a supervisor create the perception that all workers in the organisation are important regardless of rank, experience or job description. The message that each worker is valued for his own unique contribution creates a work environment of mutual respect and acceptance.

*But then, since I've started working here, my colleagues and the staff ... they also find him very supportive ... he tries to find out how they are. As a director, he not only goes to people working under him, but also to staff at ground level to find out how they are doing ... (Female 6)*

The importance of creating interpersonal relations with staff that can contribute to a cohesive and productive work environment is valued and accepted to such an extent. A participant commented on the fact that he observed such behavioural traits from his supervisor and decided to implement it in his own relationship with sub-ordinates.

*... the only way of getting good results is to be always friendly with the people ... and make sure ... by being friendly, make sure that the work is done. I encourage them to speak to me if they need help... (Male 2)*

However, from the interviews it was evident that some participants were aware of certain unacceptable traits in their supervisors.

For example, Male 4 experienced his supervisor as autocratic and reactive:

*But I try as much as possible to make it a friendly one on the basis that we are professionals ... we have to act like professionals whilst we are working together ... he is an autocratic leader ... he likes his views ... to be dominated ... and again, he has not idea to what he is doing ... thinking forward ... uhh-uhh ... He waits for things ... whatever is lying on my desk today...how am I going to deal with it ... and then, in terms of that, he panics, and when panicking, the email reflects the way of thinking at that point in time... (Male 4)*

It is clear from the extract that there is an absence of any close interpersonal relationship between the participant and his supervisor. The motivation for attempting a more 'civil' relationship with the supervisor is not of an intrinsic nature, but rather an expectation of professionalism in the workplace. Respect for the supervisor is also not evident in the use of words such as 'autocratic leader', 'dominated' and 'has not idea to what he is doing'.

Although examples were given of effective communication in the workplace and how it could positively affect the behaviour of sub-ordinates, such processes are not always painless and without effort. One participant implicitly referred to the difficulty and challenge of building a relationship based on trust and open communication.

*... and now we try to work things out ... or whatever ... you know you try to meet someone halfway ... but I mean the difficult thing is to gain ... to gain trust ... so that you can slowly ... let it go ... and you need to practise ... practise in such situations ... it is not always natural ... it's sometimes difficult to be open and honest ... (Male 1)*

An interesting comment was furthermore made by Male 1 when he mentioned that his supervisor is always in his immediate vicinity. Although it could be assumed that some of the other participants would view the physical closeness of the supervisor as a sign of support when needed, it is not suggested in this case. The question can rightly be asked whether the participant craves more autonomy in the workplace or, equally, whether it goes deeper to a subconscious question of a lack of trust in the participant.

*... and you think about work the whole time ... and and and ... my superior is forever in the office ... he looks like the building... (Male 1)*

The first main theme identified in the research is the role of the supervisor. Participants made special mention of the importance of the interpersonal relationship with the supervisor. Guidance, support and help with certain tasks were mentioned as examples (Sower, 2011). Such supportive leadership traits contribute to perceptions of work satisfaction (Ahmad & Yekta, 2010; Lawrence, 2007). Criticism was also associated with the supervisor. Certain participants mentioned behavioural traits they viewed as unacceptable in the organisation. This part of the main theme is associated with Herzberg's (1959) hygiene factors where it is suggested that the presence of these variables could lead to dissatisfaction. The relationship with the supervisor is highlighted by Herzberg (1959) as an extra-job factor. Vicarious reinforcement associated with the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986) can also possibly explain participants' negative reactions regarding their supervisors. It is argued that individuals observe behaviour and will assess it in terms of consequences which will affect the possibility of them imitating such behavioural traits (Bandura, 1986).

### **5.1.2 Co-workers**

The second master theme focuses on the significance of co-workers in the work environment of the middle level managers. However, the sub themes emerging from the master theme are not explicitly linked to good interpersonal relationships with co-workers, but rather implicitly manifested in participants' comments on the frustration experienced within the current work environment where language barriers are evident. Closely linked to the first sub theme is the importance placed on the purpose and role of communication within the workplace.

#### **5.1.2.1 Language as barrier in the workplace**

Female 7 experienced potential exclusion from the social circle in her work due to the fact that she could not speak Afrikaans. She was warned by her line manager that this could possibly happen and that she had to prepare herself for such a potential situation. Her situation was complicated since she was the only black person in her team and therefore had no alliance with any other African speaking colleague in her immediate work environment:

*... people maybe will tell you like they are not going to come and talk to you just because you don't know Afrikaans ... (Female 7)*

Therefore, in order to be accepted by colleagues in a white dominated workplace, Male 1 started to learn Afrikaans in order to be accepted. He mentioned that he also started to take an interest in cricket – a white man's sport – as he called it:

*So I have to learn their language and the things they like... (Male 1)*

Frustration is evident in the following extract where Male 3 implied that it was always the African person making an attempt to learn Afrikaans and that it was not reciprocal. This increases the frustration level and also highlights the potential for more complicated work relations due to undercurrent unhappiness about a certain situation:

*It's frustrating – you see the Xhosa person always tries to understand other languages – I speak English – as I am speaking with you now ... and I try to learn Afrikaans ... But there are people who not even want to take the first ... the first step of learning to say hallo in isiXhosa... (Male 3)*

Since the tool of communication in the workplace is very often either English or Afrikaans, it affects the opportunities and abilities of black employees to express themselves effectively. Misunderstanding and a lack of effective communication between employees result in work stress and frustration. As Male 3 rightly indicated, the ability of using the mother tongue enables employees to express themselves appropriately:

*Another thing is the language barrier. You want to be allowed to express this in the way you feel ... the language allow you to to how can I say ... express yourself in the way ... (Male 3)*

Interestingly, it was also perceived that the inability to speak Afrikaans or English fluently could contribute to potential exclusion from certain jobs. Female 7 suggested that although she and other black people are not able to speak Afrikaans or English, it does not imply that they are not competent and therefore not suited for a particular job:

*... but I think they should also employ more black people because we also have the potential for doing the job regardless of the language ... (Female 7)*

An interesting remark came from Female 5 where she highlighted her role as principal in her college and the demands placed on her to integrate English in a predominantly Afrikaans community:

*... most of them are doing Afrikaans as the language of instruction and a few English, and uhmm ... so the same lecturer would be in one class translate Afrikaans to English and that doesn't always work ... So I make it blatant that I am not going to be responsible for any equity if the language – if the medium of instruction is still Afrikaans because where am I going to get people to come here if they can't even understand Afrikaans... (Female 5)*

Her choice of words '*I make it blatant that I am not going to be responsible for any equity*' highlights her frustration and possibly also inability to address a sensitive issue as a non-Afrikaans speaking person. Her reference is possibly linked to the national equity expectations embedded in the civil service. It is clear from the extract that she experiences some form of helplessness due to the fact that the instruction is still in Afrikaans but that she is responsible to recruit non-Afrikaans speaking lecturers.

Language as barrier in the workplace is possibly a manifestation of a need for acceptance in the social echelon of the organisation. Participants made specific comments regarding the experiences of exclusion. They attribute such exclusions to the inability to effectively communicate in their mother tongue. Such inability creates a perception of the reality of work for the employee and whether the correct message has been received from co-workers (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Second language communication does place more strain on communication channels in the workplace due to the potential of misunderstanding and translation issues.

Another theme observed in the interviews is the frustration displayed by participants who believe that they are attempting to learn another language and culture. It is argued that such efforts are not reciprocal which contributes to a perception of unfairness in the work environment (Adams, 1963).

#### 5.1.2.2 Role of communication

Middle level managers mentioned once again the importance of communication. Within this sub theme the emphasis, however, is placed mainly on the effect of communication with

reference to co-workers on the same level as well as possible positive outcomes of effective practices when communicating with sub-ordinates.

It is clear from Female 5 that she believes that within the work context, employees should have the ability to communicate with each other in a professional manner.

*...and I always cannot understand why people can't talk to each other properly ...  
(Female 5)*

Communication is not only a prerequisite for a professional individual, but also plays a role in various levels of the daily interaction between colleagues. Within any work environment it is expected that daily differences will occur which need to be dealt with. In order to avoid lasting negative influences, it is therefore expected of the manager to address such potential problems.

*... that's where the problem started ... issues where they distance from each other and where they avoid each other ... I don't like that kind of environment ... and talk about it ... (Female 5)*

*...I think I enjoy my colleagues. We get along very well, we communicate well about problems – should any problems arise, we talk about it and try to deal with it...  
(Female 6)*

*And if there are any problems, we are encouraged to talk about it... (Female 6)*

With reference to the common values of ubuntu, it is evident from the extracts that once open communication channels have been established, an environment characterised by communal values and trust could be created. Such a work environment is characterised by an appreciation for differences and diversity.

*I believe if we have differences, we can still go on having the differences ... and talk about it ... (Female 5)*

*I try to get through the message that I try to know who you are, I am appreciative of what you do – and basically that they know that I know who they are... (Female 6)*



Consequently, when an environment of openness has been established, a potential natural result will be the creation of a work space where employees have the freedom and willingness to share – perhaps on a more personal level - their own individual developmental needs with their superior. Thus, a natural extension of effective communication in the workplace is the creation of a tool that develops more intrinsic needs of employees.

*... so I said an appraisal should be a dialogue between two people. A dialogue and at the same time it should be a friendly one between the two people ... setting targets for the person to achieve ... And if there is no ... uhh...communicating ... taking place ... (Male 4)*

*And if it doesn't happen, it is my responsibility to find out why, put strategies in place, give them direction ... and so forth ... it is important for the success of the department that I communicate their strengths and weaknesses to them ... set them targets ... do their appraisals ... (Female 8)*

*He wants me to develop in every way ... we talk about it ... a lot ... and that is also good you know ... (Male 3)*

Effective communication is highlighted as an important factor associated with the work environment. Participants made special reference to the purpose of effective communication and the potential impact it has on the development of communal values amongst employees (Henderson, 2010). A further reference has been made to the importance of communication in the advancement of continuous professional development and the target setting process.

The main theme associated with co-workers placed special emphasis on the impact of language barriers and the importance of communication in the workplace. An interesting link between communication amongst co-workers as well as the importance of communication with the supervisor is observed. It is clear from the first two main themes that communication is not only reserved for colleagues on the same level in the organisation, but it is expected that subordinates and co-workers share the same values associated with openness and trust. Such shared values will place individuals abiding to it, in the in-group in the organisation (Henderson, 2010).

### 5.1.3 Autonomy

It is clear from the interviews that participants also value a certain extent of autonomy within the work environment. Participants did not make specific reference to tasks assigned to them within this context, but rather an appreciation of an environment where there is freedom of movement as well as the potential of having an opportunity not to physically be on the work premises the whole week.

#### 5.1.3.1 Work environment

Male 1 compared his current work experience with being back at school. This suggests that he dislikes the rules and regulations associated with his organisation.

*You are expected to be here at certain times, it sometimes feel like being back at school ... (Male 1)*

In Male 2's work environment, his department is physically separate from the rest of the building. This creates a perception of physical distance, but he also commented on them being able to move in and out of the work environment without needing to explain themselves to somebody else:

*I like the fact that we get on with each other ... we we we respect each other here in this part of the building ... that's good for me ... we come and go as needed ... not checking up on you ... (Male 2)*

Male 3 previously worked in a school and compared his current job with his experiences then. He mentioned that it was very difficult to be late for lessons in a school, but in his current job it doesn't seem to be the case. It is expected that, since he currently works at a university, lessons do not start as punctually as in schools and therefore he views it also as a more flexible approach to time as opposed to his experiences in a school:

*It is nice to have some freedom ... say ... I don't have to ... if I'm late for ten minutes for the beginning for the school at 8 o'clock, I have to explain ... here I just come to the lecture and then I do my work ... (Male 3)*

Female 6 is busy working on her PhD and commented on the fact that she has a Friday to work on her research and that it is not then expected of her to be at work physically. That, combined with the ability to move freely within the working day, was mentioned as a positive aspect of her job:

*But for somebody in the work environment in general, I find I find I need time off outside normal working hours ... (Female 6)*

Within Female 8's work environment, staff members are allowed a certain time off site from the physical college site:

*Because I read the conditions of the colleges and when I came here ... oh actually ... you can have two hours a week off site ... which was good because you could choose how to use that time ... (Female 8)*

The need for autonomy was highlighted by means of reference to the appreciation of a work environment where employees can freely move around without being checked upon. A second interesting point was the references from female respondents who valued the opportunity to have certain time periods during the day where they did not have to be on the work premises. Notably, no explanations were given for their need to be away from the work environment other than one participant mentioning the time spent working on her PhD degree. One would have expected some comments regarding family demands or role conflict as suggested in the literature. The lack of such issues could possibly be associated with the sample where only one female participant is married. Family responsibilities are therefore not necessarily a priority at this stage in their lives.

In the literature, ample evidence is found which suggests the importance of independence and autonomy in the workplace (Abdel-Halim, 1983; Vigoda, 2000). A possible suggestion for the need and appreciation of autonomy could be an unconscious desire to be trusted in the workplace due to the participants' competence and their ability to complete given tasks (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

#### **5.1.4 Recognition**

It was clear from the interviews that all participants had a need to be accepted within their work environments. They communicated a need for acknowledgement and appreciation of their own unique skills and qualifications. Recognition was not defined as focusing on a job

well done, or the acknowledgement of successful completion of tasks, but rather an appreciation for the qualifications being brought to the workplace. The first sub-theme therefore refers to the acceptance of their qualifications and skills whereas the second sub-theme reflects an often emotive response regarding perceptions of affirmative action. Affirmative action is viewed in the current investigation as a complementary variable which highlights the intricate complexities of perceptions of recognition amongst participants. In the second sub-dimension, therefore, participants comment on affirmative action that should reflect the ability of the candidate – therefore enforcing the assumption of competency rather than any other requirement as the essence of recruitment.

#### 5.1.4.1 Recognition of competency

A rather complicated dilemma for participants is the fact that there are certain perceptions regarding their competence and abilities. For example, Male 1 struggled with perceptions of other workers when starting with a new job. He was very aware of potential perceptions regarding his competency and he highlighted it several times during the interview that he is highly educated and that he has the ability to do the job well:

*I mean when you are black and you get a job ... people will look at you and they will wonder if you can do the job properly ... and if you are educated like me ... I know I can do my job ... (Male 1)*

As expected, the dilemma for Male 1 was to attempt to consequently change the negative perceptions of those in the workplace. Within the context of the study, it is assumed that potentially more than white workers, he had to prove himself to others in order to substantiate his claims that he was the right person for the job.

It could be argued that a natural consequence of such negative perceptions would be to be reflective and compare one's abilities with those being viewed as more competent or experienced. This is evident in the comment of Male 1 where he compared his work experience with that of his supervisor.

*There is a white manager and I am more educated than him ... I can do the job ... And ... experience wise he has more – he has worked longer at the company ... and my previous job I was a chief director and now I'm sort of a line manager or*

*department manager at a company. It is a big swap from making the decisions and now I'm in the position to implement the strategic decisions... (Male 1)*

It is clear from his comments '*it is a big swap from making the decision and now I'm in the position to implement the strategic decisions*' that he finds the change in his job responsibilities difficult. It is implied that he was used to making strategic decisions and the shift to him being the middle level manager implementing it is difficult, especially due to his perception that he is better qualified than his white manager.

For individuals experiencing potentially negative attitudes towards their skills and abilities in the workplace, they have the option of either ignoring it or addressing it as far as possible. From the interviews it was clear that some participants chose to market themselves and their abilities.

*I've been telling them I've been employed as a professional person – a person also with high qualifications from the university ... (Female 7)*

Her word choice of '*a person also with high qualifications from the university*' suggests that she compared herself with her colleagues and attempted to convince them that her qualifications were equal to theirs.

Female 6 was proud in describing her career and the fact that she was headhunted for a particular position. She highlighted her skills and abilities as reasons for her being appointed into a particular post:

*... I was chosen ... I was headhunted for the job. And then got the lecturer post. My experience played a role in the appointment... (Female 6)*

The question can be asked why it is important for employees to receive acknowledgement for their skills being brought to the workplace. A possible suggestion – apart from the intrinsic value of such appreciation – is that individuals do want to fit in and be accepted within their work environments.

*No, I've just stopped with my PhD. I've done it for 2 years but uhh ... due to personal problems ... I couldn't proceed but now ... everything ... everything that I see now is coming in place so ... I... I will proceed ... (Male 2)*

*But maybe I will start to think of my PhD again ... (Male 3)*

In both cases it is suggested that due to the nature of their jobs, working within the university setting, it is expected of them to progress in the academic field. A possible suggestion is that their line managers are aware of the demands placed on employees within the tertiary educational field and that they would like to guide them towards what is possibly formally expected of them.

Participants were vocal in their need to be recognised in the workplace. They made special reference to their qualifications and were vocal in convincing others of their qualifications and skills. Certain job characteristics such as feedback and autonomy contribute to work motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory could possibly explain the participants' need for acceptance of their qualifications. It is suggested that participants entered the work environment with a specific expectation based on the value they placed on the job offered to them and their perception of them deserving the particular job. Discrepancy will develop if they do not experience an environment where others acknowledge their unique contribution to the organisation.

It is evident from the interviews that participants do compare themselves with others which inevitably leads to more frustration. Inequity is experienced since they believe they have similar or better qualifications than their colleagues and therefore deserve the positions (Adams, 1965). Once again one can identify the need for trust and acceptance due to their desire to be viewed as competent in the workplace.

#### 5.1.4.2 Affirmative action based on ability

The second sub theme is closely linked with the first. To a certain extent it can be viewed as an extension of the former. The interviews illustrated that often participants viewed it as an insult to be appointed in a job based on skin colour, but that some had the ability to distance themselves from personal viewpoints and attempted to view the legislation from a more holistic angle.

Some of the participants' comments, however, illustrate the close link with the first sub theme. Professional ability and being the appropriate candidate for the job are viewed as important.

*... but people need to be qualified for the position ... because you don't want to do the job and people think you cannot do it...it's about fighting perceptions as well ... I know I can do my job ... I don't want people to think that I am here just because of my skin colour ... (Male 1)*

*You see, I ... I'm a person who believes that the right person, the right candidate would get the job. Regardless of the colour. If you do your job well, if you are qualified, you should take it. I will feel offended to be given a job just because I'm black ... because I cannot ... therefore ... you see, I believe I should work hard like anybody else to earn what I have ... (Male 3)*

*For my viewpoint in general, people shouldn't be look at like who are you in order for the company to employ you ... They should employ you just because you have skill – you deserved it the job ... (Female 7)*

As expected, the topic is more complex than a simple one-dimensional response. Employees can be torn between the inequalities of the past and therefore promote the implementation of such practices. However, similarly, as educated employees, logic and realism could result in uncertainty about whether appointing only black people in a certain position is to the advantage of the organisation.

*Because no we see ... employ more blacks ... than whites ... to me ... although I encourage the people to be employed ... but, they must not be employed on the basis of ... of colour ... rather ability ... (Male 2)*

As previously mentioned, the nature of the task of a middle level manager is to communicate strategic decisions to sub-ordinates. It is therefore assumed that middle managers share the organisational goals and vision. Consequently the successes of the organisation will be a priority for the majority of such employees.

Some participants shared perhaps a more objective viewpoint regarding affirmative action strictly from an organisational perspective. For example, Female 6 suggested not only negative consequences for appointees not prepared for the job demands, but also organisations suffering in the long term.

*But I think these people need to be qualified ... to get the opportunity then to prove themselves. But in our country, many people who are employed in a position, is*

*incompetent. If it is implemented, there needs to be very strict guidelines, because the individual suffers because of the incompetence, but the company suffers as well ... (Female 6)*

*I think you can apply it if you have a good candidate out of the people who were ... uhh ... short-listed and go for the interviews because it's not use – I mean, in the position where I am – if, if people were coming here and I wasn't satisfied with them in the interviews, then I see no point why I should ... appoint the person. So I prefer to have the right appointment right from the beginning ... (Female 5)*

Emotive responses were given with reference to affirmative action. It was clear from the interviews that participants felt that they would be insulted if they were appointed based on skin colour. However, there was a degree of uncertainty in a comment where a participant did indicate the need to be appointed based on ability but similarly acknowledged the need for accommodating more black employees in the workplace. Respondents also displayed the ability to view affirmative action practices objectively by assessing it against the benefits for the organisation.

The stereotypical viewpoint that affirmative action practices are mainly 'window-dressing' or filling quotas possibly contributes to these emotive responses of participants (Bendix, 2001). The situation is possibly further complicated by the perception of many white colleagues that black employees are not necessarily able to compete in the organisational hierarchy (De Witt, Erasmus & Swanepoel, 1998).

The main theme of recognition is more complex than just the acceptance of qualifications and skills in the workplace. It is possibly a manifestation of the need to fit into the organisation and to be rewarded and appreciated for the skills being brought to the workplace.

### **5.1.5 Personal development**

The fifth master theme focuses on the experiences of personal development. This theme highlights specific motivational variables within the work environment. The first sub theme identified includes examples of the importance of meaningful work and personal accomplishment which results in striving for self-actualisation. As illustrated in the interviews, many participants also commented on their ability to assert themselves and to



have confidence in their own abilities. This resulted in the development of a sub theme focusing on the role of self-efficacy in the lived worlds of participants. It is argued that the impact of self-actualisation and self-efficacy should be viewed against the background of past socio-political experiences of participants.

#### 5.1.5.1 Working towards self-actualisation

Many participants mentioned the need to be challenged within the work environment. They use practical examples within their daily routine to demonstrate an intrinsic need to reach beyond the minimum expectations of the job description. This is demonstrated in for example creating a learning environment for students that goes beyond the daily routine of lessons or being able to assist students with their own unique needs.

*So it's not only a language or a job ... it becomes a cultural experience as well ... we dance, we sing etcetera ... (Male 3)*

*The projects that require documents and the requests of the clients. My interest lies in being able to identify documents – finding what is necessary – that's my goal... (Female 6)*

*And then also, what I enjoy the most is for the students who are coming from different backgrounds ... coming to approach me based on ... asking for assistance and then I become so proud if I ... assisted the student on a particular thing ... if I can ... (Female 7)*

*... but you're always busy – that I can say. That's the challenge for me – not being – because I get easily bored of doing the same thing... (Female 5)*

Closely related with the need to be challenged is the need for personal growth and progress within the workplace. Examples mentioned by participants reflect the daily tasks, but also have a higher dimension where upon references are made regarding personal growth on an intrinsic level. In one case a participant explicitly referred to the relative unimportance of extrinsic rewards as opposed to the more imperative intrinsic rewards.

*... it's more than just teaching in a way ... it's about coordination of the language also ... it's it's it's sometimes a bit overwhelming ... a lot to do ... and I want to ... to be*

*good ... want to do everything well ... what they expect of me ... and what I expect from myself... (Male 2)*

*... I want to be happy in my work environment and I want to come to work and grow every day ... but ... that's not always the case ... it's difficult to explain ... in a sense ... if you think that the company will support you and understand your needs ... that you want to grow ... do your best ... (Male 1)*

It was clear from the interviews that participants valued the feeling of personal accomplishment in their daily tasks and interactions.

*When I've had a very good lesson, and I feel that the kids have enjoyed the lesson, that really makes my day. When I feel I was the best teacher I could be ... (Female 8)*

*I like the feeling of accomplishment ... after after people attended the lectures and and they seem as if they've enjoyed it ... I like the feeling that I've contributed to them ... (Male 3)*

Within the context of meaningful work and the need for achievement, it was clear that participants valued the necessity of 'giving back to the community'. Evidence for the need for charitable work is found in the following comments:

*... that's why I enjoy the most of that because I always feel that I'm making a difference ... within the country ... (Male 2)*

*In the sense that I realised that yes, we are making profit, we're getting bonuses at the end of the year ... what else is there for us to do? And ... and all along I had this belief in me that to give a bit back to the community ... I did not enjoy it, because it was all about making money ... (Male 4)*

An interesting link is found with the previous main theme of recognition of competency. The male participants specifically mentioned the importance of being viewed as an expert or to being the best in their particular field or work environment. Such feelings are closely linked with the need for growth and personal success and could perhaps be viewed as the final conclusive evidence of being viewed as 'good enough' for a particular job.

*... you see as ... uhh ...that the language ... uh ... now I became an expert with my colleagues ... I I that ... you see ... my colleagues know that I have experience in the field ... that is good for me that they ... acknowledged that you know ... (Male 2)*

*In 2001 ... I was chosen ... and he said well here's an opportunity for you – apply. I was selected out of all the applicants – and there were many. They were very impressed with my credentials... (Male 4)*

*I think that I see ... a ... a ... type of reflection of myself in what I do at work ... I think, in a way ... being happy is to do with being the best you can be ... and that is a reflection of me ... (Male 1)*

*But maybe I will start to think of the PhD again ... there are so many things to do ... and I want to succeed in it ... to deliver what I can ... (Male 3)*

Participants made several comments regarding the importance of being challenged in the workplace and being successful in what they do. A feeling of accomplishment is associated with such successes and contributes to a perception of being the best or an expert in their field (Van Wart, 2008).

Content theories such as the Hierarchy of Needs (1943), the Achievement Motivation Theory (1953) and the Two-Factor Theory (1966) all refer to the need for challenge, growth and self-actualisation. It is suggested that the need for self-actualisation could possibly be linked to the main theme associated with recognition since participants strive to be the best and attempt to demonstrate their competency and skills.

#### 5.1.5.2 Importance of self-efficacy

Self-efficacy differs from self-actualisation in the way that the emphasis is placed on the cognitive dimension in which participants believe that they can attain certain goals and display appropriate behaviour. It is therefore viewed as a self-belief orientation.

Female 5's self-efficacy was clear in her explanation of how she decided to take matters into her own hands when she started to apply to university and for bursaries. As mentioned previously, these participants all bar one come from previously disadvantaged environments

and her ambition to become someone and to achieve a particular goal is evident in her comment:

*I went to look for it myself. That's where I got to see the addresses of these places, institutions and bursary places. Otherwise, probably never had that information ...*  
(Female 5)

Female 5 also referred to her job interview for her current position. She explained how uncertain she was and how she rationalised it by believing it would serve as an experience, rather than focusing on the importance of being appointed. However, in the extract, she highlighted once again that her experience contributed to her confidence in herself:

*Not that I didn't have confidence in myself, I know I could do it ... my experience ...*  
(Female 5)

She also referred to some of her earlier job experiences and mentioned that it is important to her to be challenged. She set herself a time limit and decided that only a certain time period is allowed at a job. Her word choice of '*then I should be looking out*' suggests that she is not waiting for somebody else to create a particular opportunity, but that she herself is prepared to find alternatives:

*... and I set a goal for myself if it's ten years and I'm still standing in class then I think I should be looking out ...* (Female 5)

Female 8 commented on her students where she attempts to create an environment where youngsters become aware of their own responsibilities and actions. While these youths did not grow up with a formal family structure in place or experienced a lack of a positive role model in their lives, her challenge remains to create within them the paradigm that life consists of choices and that responsibility for it lies within the individual. She therefore attempts to empower the young people she works with in order to be fully prepared for the future ahead of them:

*... in terms of helping them to develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions and helping them to grow ... to work for what they want in life ...* (Female 8)

Female 6 is of the opinion that in general individuals are responsible for their own job satisfaction. She communicates that the self is not a victim and that, if necessary, changes need to take place and the self is the only variable able to change it:

*But I think the one thing that is always on my mind when you talk about job satisfaction is that we need to take responsibility for our own job satisfaction. I strongly believe that I need to take responsibility – if I'm not enjoying my job – I should be the one to find out what I should do to enjoy it... (Female 6)*

Female 5 is in charge of a college and views her ability to solve problems as an important factor. She discussed the difficulty in attempting to bring staff together as a unit. Within the conversation it was clear that she maintained that her ability to resolve the issue is important:

*And ... we've got to be careful not to choose sides but to get to the source of the problem ... and ... and ... tell what you perceive out of the conversations – I think having the ability to resolve the issue in the end is what makes me happy and satisfied... (Female 5)*

This sub theme was only mentioned by females where they made reference to their ability to take matters in their own hands and their perception that individuals are responsible for their own choices and actions. The need for self-efficacy is associated with the Social Learning Theory (1986) where it is argued that a triage between the environment, behaviour and perceptions act as instigator of a judgement of an individuals' own abilities. Self-efficacy is in other words the ability of individuals to use their cognitions and emotions to motivate themselves and to achieve a particular goal (Bandura, 1994).

The main theme of personal progress made reference to the need for self-actualisation and self-efficacy. Ample evidence in the literature is found where it is suggested that progress and success contributes to perceptions of work satisfaction.

## **5.2 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SOURCES OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Based on the qualitative analysis of the different master themes, the following gender differences were identified. It is highlighted that such gender differences are based on the

interpretation of the researcher and the double hermeneutic processes. It is acknowledged that other researchers could differ in their conclusions.

## 5.2.1 Supervisor

It was clear from the data that gender differences were prevalent in this master theme. Emphasis was placed on the importance of interpersonal relations and also the possible negative impact of undesired behavioural traits of supervisors on managers.

### 5.2.1.1 Interpersonal relations

Within this master theme, mostly females commented on the qualities of the supervisor to act as a guide, mentor or coach. References were made about the impact of the supervisor on their behaviour.

*...my boss is a veeerrryyy kind person – he’s not just being a boss to me – he’s like a father... (Female 7)*

*I think that the director is immensely supportive and interested in what I’m doing... (Female 6)*

Although a male also referred to the supportive role of the supervisor, it was clear from the interviews that females were more expressive in their description of the supervisor’s role to help and guide them.

It was mostly males who made comments regarding the supervisor communicating certain expectations to them. Emphasis here is placed on achieving certain targets and encouragement to be creative within the work environment.

*He tells me exactly what he needs from you... (Male 2)*

*And he wants me to be creative enough... (Male 3)*

The male comments suggest that the supervisor is direct and clear in what is expected. It is suggested that emphasis is placed on what is required in the workplace.

With reference to the interest of the wellbeing of staff members, it was a female who commented on this, suggesting that either males did not experience it in their immediate work environment or, alternatively, that they did not view it as an important quality in their supervisor.

*Interested in what I am doing, whether I am coping and whether I'm enjoying what I'm doing ... (Female 6)*

However, it was clear from the interviews that only male participants were critical of their supervisor. This was not evident in the female interviews.

*But I mean the difficult thing is to gain ... to gain trust ... it's not always natural ... (Male 1)*

*We have to act as professionals whilst we are working together ... he is an autocratic leader ... he likes his views ... to be dominated ... (Male 4)*

*He waits for things ... whatever is lying on my desk today ... how am I going to deal with it ... and the, in terms of that, he panics ... (Male 4)*

A possible suggestion could be that males expect more from their supervisor and that they have different criteria in evaluating the success of the supervisor. Issues such as a lack of trust, autocratic leadership and reactive behaviour are highlighted as negative traits of the supervisor. It is expected that they will value the opposing traits in the work environment.

Within this master theme it was clear that females rated the importance of close personal relationships with the supervisor higher than males. Although males commented on the necessity of communication to share expectations and targets, it was on a more personal level in the case of the females. Only male participants criticised their supervisors and indicated that they were unsatisfied with certain behavioural traits they observe in the workplace.

### **5.2.2 Co-workers**

It was clear from the interviews that males and females valued different aspects and dimensions of co-workers in their immediate work environment.

### 5.2.2.1 Language as barrier in the workplace

With reference to language as a barrier in the workplace, males were more vocal about their frustrations with the status quo. One female, however, commented on her need to know Afrikaans since she feels excluded from the social circle. This indicates a social need to be met in being able to communicate in Afrikaans. Such a skill will help her to feel included within the social circle in her workplace.

*People maybe will ... like ... they are not going to come and talk to you just because you don't know Afrikaans ... (Female 7)*

The only other comment made about the impact of language in the workplace by a female related to legislation and expectations of her role to deal with such challenges.

Males were critical about the language barrier by referring to their awareness of a lack of reciprocal effort from white counterparts to also learn another language in order to communicate effectively. It is suggested that these participants realised the necessity of learning another language in order to be able to 'survive' in the workplace. For example, one male who works in a white-dominated environment started to learn Afrikaans in order to be accepted by his colleagues:

*So I have to learn their language and the things they like ... (Male 1)*

*It's frustrating – you see the Xhosa person always tries to understand other languages ... but there are people who not even want to take the first ... the first step of learning to say hallo in isiXhosa ... (Male 3)*

Even though an effort has been made to learn Afrikaans specifically, frustration is also evident in other comments of Male 3 who argues that it is difficult for him to express himself in another language:

*You want to be allowed to express this in the way you feel ... the language allow you to to how can I say ... express yourself in the way ... (Male 3)*

Emphasis is placed here on the efforts of males to learn another language and to attempt to be accepted as a result of it. It is clear from their comments that they expect a similar effort in return. Expectations are therefore high that mutual effort is needed in order to address



such a barrier. It is not clear from the male interviews why they made an effort to address the language issue. Contrary to the female response who clearly indicated her need to be included in the social realm, the males did not specify why they viewed the language barrier as a problem. The only suggestion was the inability to express themselves, but once again, it is unclear whether it is based on a social or work-based perception.

#### 5.2.2.2 Role of communication

Males commented on the impact and role of communication to a lesser extent than females. The majority of the responses regarding the importance of communication came from female respondents. It was females who commented on the purpose of open communication channels within the workplace. Emphasis was placed on the necessity to use this in order to address differences and deal with potential problems that could arise.

*I believe that if we have differences, we can still go on having the differences ... and talk about it ... (Female 5)*

*We communicate well about problems – should any problems arise, we talk about it and try to deal with it ... (Female 6)*

Reference to the importance of communication in the development of the individual and in contributing to professional development was made by both a male and female respondent.

*It is important for the success of the department that I communicate their strengths and weaknesses to them ... (Female 8)*

*... so I said an appraisal should be a dialogue between two people. A dialogue and at the same time it should be a friendly one between the two people ... setting targets for the person to achieve ... (Male 4)*

Gender differences were observed within the second main theme associated with co-workers. Language as a barrier manifested differently for both sexes where females suggested the language barrier to be a cause for social exclusion in the workplace whilst males commented on their efforts to know other languages and culture but with no reciprocity.

Mainly females suggested the importance of open communication in the workplace. A link is observed with the first main theme where mostly females commented on the importance of a close working relationship with the supervisor. It is suggested that females in this investigation display a need for acceptance and inclusion within the workplace at all levels of the hierarchy.

### **5.2.3 Autonomy**

It was clear that both males and females valued autonomy in the workplace. Males, however, commented on aspects within the work environment whilst females placed more emphasis on freedom outside working hours.

#### **5.2.3.1 Work environment**

The majority of males commented on their need for autonomy at work. This was with specific reference to a more autonomous approach within the physical work environment. They suggested that they prefer the ability to move around freely and not to have somebody that checks up on them constantly. This dimension of job satisfaction is usually associated with aspects such as the way the job is done or autonomy in decision-making. However, within this investigation the reference was somewhat vague with emphasis rather on the work environment in general.

Male 1 dislikes the rules and regulations placed upon him and consequently he refers to his work environment as being back at school:

*You are expected to be here at certain times, it sometimes feel like being back at school ... (Male 1)*

*We come and go as needed ... not checking up on you ... (Male 2)*

*It is nice to have some freedom ... here I just come to the lecture and then I do my work ... (Male 3)*

The females who commented on autonomy suggested that they enjoy the fact that they could be away from the work environment at selected times of the week. One female has the opportunity to work on her PhD from home on a Friday and another commented on the

fact that she has off-site time once a week at her college. A question to ask would be why females prefer some time away from work. It could be suggested that family responsibilities could play a role, although this was not mentioned specifically in the interviews. Interestingly males made comments about flexibility within the work environment, not necessarily having the ability to have time away from work.

The gender differences observed in the third main theme is a different emphasis placed on autonomy by the two sexes. Males made specific reference to the importance of freedom within the work environment whilst females commented on the advantage of being able to leave the work premises for a certain time of the week.

#### **5.2.4 Recognition**

Recognition was not associated with 'a job well done', but rather focused on the acknowledgement of qualifications brought to the workplace.

##### **5.2.4.1 Recognition of competency**

There were no significant gender differences identified within this sub-dimension. Both males and females commented on their need to be accepted based on their ability and skills. One male commented on the perceptions other employees have about his abilities. He stated later on in the interview that he is more educated than his white supervisor.

Two females also suggested that they have to tackle preconceived perceptions regarding their skills and qualifications. One female mentioned to her colleagues that she is equally qualified for the post. Another commented on the fact that she was headhunted for her post – suggesting her qualifications and skills are desirable.

##### **5.2.4.2 Affirmative action based on ability**

There were also no gender differences found in the comments about affirmative action being related to competency and ability. Both sexes commented on the fact that affirmative action should be implemented based on the criteria of ability.

*But people need to be qualified for the position ... because you don't want to do the job and people think you cannot do it ... (Male 1)*

*But they must not be employed on the basis of ... of colour ... rather ability ... (Male 2)*

*I'm a person who believes that the right person, the right candidate would get the job. Regardless of colour ... (Male 3)*

Females shared similar viewpoints:

*But I think these people need to be qualified ... to get the opportunity then to prove themselves ... (Female 6)*

*They should employ you just because you have skill – you deserved it the job ... (Female 7)*

*So I prefer to have the right appointment right from the beginning ... (Female 5)*

Since no gender differences were found in this main theme, it is suggested that due to the nature of the study with a homogeneous sample, the majority of participants are educated to a similar level and would therefore have similar expectations associated with the acceptance of the skills and knowledge they bring to the workplace.

### **5.2.5 Sense of personal development**

Males and females differed in their perceptions regarding the importance of personal development in their working environment.

#### **5.2.5.1 Working towards self-actualisation**

Both males and females commented on their need to be challenged within the work environment. Practical examples were given where the challenge is not to become bored, to identify specific documents requested by clients or to be able to help students with challenging requests.

*My interest lies in being able to identify documents – finding what is necessary – that's my goal ... (Female 6)*

*... what I enjoy the most is for the students who are coming from different background ... then I become so proud if I ... assisted the students on a particular thing ... (Female 7)*

*... and I want to ... to be good ... want to do everything well ... what they expect of me ... and what I expect from myself ... (Male 2)*

It was mostly males who made suggestions about the need for personal growth and advancement, however.

*... I want to be happy in my work environment and I want to come to work and grow every day ... (Male 1)*

*... what else is there for us to do? And ... and all along I had this belief in me that to give a bit back to the community ... (Male 4)*

No particular gender differences were found with reference to a sense of personal accomplishment in the workplace. Both males and females commented on aspects such as their pride in delivering a lesson where they felt they were the best teacher or where students seemed to enjoy the lessons delivered by the respondent.

As mentioned previously, it was the male participants who made comments about their need to be acknowledged as experts in their field of interest. Comments ranged from a personal reflection of attempting to be the best they could be to explicitly mentioning the fact that he was viewed as an expert within his field of knowledge.

With reference to the sub theme of self-actualisation it was clear that from a gender perspective, mostly males made particular reference to their need to succeed and grow and the importance to them of being viewed as an expert in their field.

#### 5.2.5.2 Importance of self-efficacy

Mostly females commented on the importance and the impact of self-efficacy in their lives.

*I went to look for it myself. I had to. Otherwise, probably never had that information ... (Female 5)*

*In terms of helping them to develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions and helping them to grow ... to work for what they want in life ... (Female 8)*

*But I think, the one thing that is always on my mind when you talk about job satisfaction is that we need to take responsibility for our own job satisfaction ... (Female 6)*

*Not that I didn't have confidence in myself, I know I could do it ... my experience ... (Female 5)*

The majority of females made comments indirectly associated with the importance of self-efficacy. It is argued that this cognitive trait is possibly more developed in females since they have been at the back end of any progress and opportunities given to individuals in the past. Black females were forced to look after themselves – even more than black males. This could have resulted in their views that nothing could be taken for granted and that the individual is responsible for change and development

### **5.3 THE ROLE OF ACCULTURATION IN THE EXPERIENCE OF JOB SATISFACTION**

Within the South African work environment, it is clear that individualistic and collectivist cultures are expected to merge into a successful and productive organisation. Some interrelated issues were found in the conversations with participants. In some cases participants experienced conflict when different cultures dictated different ways of behaving in the workplace. This resulted in a need for mutual understanding and acknowledgement of such demands placed on the individual. It was also clear that a process of acculturation was experienced where participants often fluctuated between their own original cultural beliefs and the predominantly Western environment they are working in.

It was evident from the interviews that participants often experienced conflict when different cultures dictate different ways of behaving within certain situations. The comments made, however, were not necessarily related to the work environment, but it is suggested that such

perceptions will inevitably have an impact on the way in which participants view their colleagues in the more Westernised work environment.

*And there I ... I want other people to know that if I'm not contributing a lot, to discussion ... they must know that my culture ... restricts me ... (Male 2)*

What was interesting from Female 8's comment is her suggestion that black males have difficulty working with a female manager. Guided by the literature it was expected to be a more prominent theme during the investigation, but surprisingly this was the only comment made in that regard. It is suggested that it could possibly be due to the small sample size used in the investigation, but equally significantly, it could well be that the process of acculturation has had an impact on the male participants and that such issues are no longer typical in their daily work experiences.

*I think it's culture ... isn't it? The cultural thing. They don't take instructions from women ... they come from a cultural background where ... they are always the head ... in brackets, head of the family and as such women should take instructions from them ... (Female 8)*

It is evident from the extract that culture has the potential for misunderstanding which could impact on trust relationships. Therefore it is clear from interviews that participants view it as necessary that an effort is made to understand each others' cultures. For example, Male 1 mentioned the importance of two colleagues understanding and accepting their different cultural and historical backgrounds:

*We both need to understand the other one ... we come from different histories and different backgrounds ... (Male 1)*

*... because when I can take my culture ... I am going to take my cultural differences to the office, I don't think everything will go all right ... (Female 7)*

Later in the interview he acknowledged that white and black colleagues are not yet at the level of mutual co-operation and understanding as it should be, but that more and more opportunities are created for such behaviour to develop.

*Ja, ja ... I mean it's still quite a way to go before we are on the right level ... but there is a platform created to provide a shift ... also opportunities ... and understanding ...*

*The ... the fact that we work more closely together ... at the same level ... means you start to see each other in a different light and ... and you maybe start to understand each other's culture also better ... (Male 1)*

*Yeah ... I can explain it that even if the person is not aware that he spread the word ... someone is good in doing this ... that that makes me proud to think that I played a role in helping someone else to to to ... to get to know another culture and language ... and and then they share that again with other people ... that is good for me ... (Male 2)*

With reference to ubuntu, some respondents commented on the fact that often other people do not know or understand the ubuntu practices.

*Uhh ... yeah ... it's difficult to ... to practice ubuntu here ... because ... because people are ... they don't know ubuntu ... (Male 3)*

It is expected that participants will experience a process of acculturation since they are working in a predominantly Westernised environment where limited if any provision has been made for the acceptance and integration of cultural diversity. However, it is important to note that not all participants grew up in a traditional culturally integrated society. Therefore it is assumed that 'traditional' cultural issues would not be as relevant to them. Also the process of acculturation might not be as significant to them as to other participants.

*If I can be honest with you, I did not grow up being very cultural at all. So, I don't really experience that so much. I must say though that the aspects of caring for each other – the collective – more important than the individual, is important. I think it's trying to find a balance between both ... (Female 6)*

Since all the preceding comments place emphasis on mutual understanding, it can be suggested that acculturation in the South African context can possibly be the platform for the creation of a unique culture – work related or in other contexts.

Furthermore, evidence of acculturation comes from some conversations where participants made comments about the individualistic viewpoint where individuals need to take responsibility for their own actions. Such a comment is moving away from the collective nature of ubuntu to embracing a more individualistic flavour.



*It is important for the individual – for his sake, that this is resolved ... to move forward. Each person individually needs to take responsibility ... (Male 4)*

The impact of culture and cultural values are a complex phenomenon which highlighted interrelated themes. On the one hand participants experience conflict in the workplace due to their cultural demands and expectations which result in a need for mutual understanding in the organisation. However, it was also clear that the participants are partly involved in the process of acculturation since comments were made where it was clear that they adopted Western working practices and values at certain times (Human, 1996; Koopman, 1994).

## **5.4 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL VARIABLES**

As mentioned earlier, it has been decided to contextualise the lived experiences of participants by referring to themes emerging from the interviews that highlighted their life experiences more clearly. It is acknowledged that these factors are not directly associated with the dimensions of job satisfaction, but rather emphasise the necessity for an acknowledgement of these variables that could have a direct or indirect impact on career experiences in general. The sub-themes emerging from this are the emphasis placed on the lack of cohesive career guidance which consequently will impact career experiences of participants. Closely linked with the former issues it was clear that the majority of participants referred to their lack of financial resources whilst aiming to fulfil their ambitions. The second sub-theme refers to the socio-political context in which participants had to grow up and how it influenced their perception about themselves and the workplace.

### **5.4.1 Lack of cohesive career guidance and financial support**

Participants mentioned that the lack of formal and effective career guidance resulted in basic and restricted career options for their peer group. Experiences in school were shared. As Female 5 describes her perceptions regarding career counselling in school:

*Ja, those were the known careers in our communities at the time, and we didn't have ... even if there was career guidance as a subject in our schools – because it was allocated in the timetable ... but they didn't give us any guidance career wise, those teachers. Instead, it was regarded as a free period and we sat there and we thought 'aagh' we were given nothing ... (Female 5)*

Although the support was officially available to students, it was not presented in a useful way. She uses the words '*those teachers*', indicating a distance between students and staff members associated with career guidance. It is assumed that no close relationship was built between students and staff responsible for the delivery of career guidance due to perceptions of students that the lesson is '*a free period*' as mentioned in the extract. Students' perceptions regarding the quality of information are also highlighted in the extract. The reference to '*aagh we were given nothing*' suggests that students anticipated what would happen in the lessons and therefore judged it as either inappropriate or not useful for their particular needs.

This could have resulted in students being ill-informed about the potential career options available to them. Male 1 referred to him taking Accounting up and to matric, but that he did not really understand the relevance of the subject:

*Basically I took it to matric but had no idea what you do with it. You know, in the townships with no guidance ... (Male 1)*

*... and we did not have anybody telling us how it works or what to do ... many of these things we had to find out for ourselves ... (Male 1)*

Female 5 commented on career choices such as teaching and nursing as popular choices:

*I just don't like ... because those careers were so popular within us. There was nothing else to study for – people were saying they are going to study either teaching and nursing ... (Female 5)*

Consequently, many students were forced to do career research independently and use their own resources to plan potential tertiary education and future careers. Normally the local library was the main source of information for these students growing up in the townships.

The words '*there was nothing else to study*' suggest that the consequence of non-existing or weak career counselling narrowed students' knowledge of any other potential career options available to them. This extract also highlights the participant's dislike in the choice of a particular career simply because students chose it. '*I just don't like it ...*' was indicative of her non-conformist attitude towards a general acceptance of students' decisions to study either nursing or teaching at tertiary level.

It was clear from the interviews that many participants were proud of what they achieved – even without the help of guidance teachers or other role players. Female 7's account demonstrates an intrinsic need to succeed and to achieve.

*But I got in and ... and even though we did not get such good help at school you know, I was very good at what I do ... (Female 7)*

Her word choice '*but I got in ...*' and then further, '*I was very good at what I do*' suggests a drive to succeed despite personal circumstances and a sense of achievement. In this comment she reflected on the process of her applying to university and how she consequently graduated whilst being involved in various student leadership activities.

However, the opposite was also found during the interviews. It was evident that due to these noted circumstances, students often also chose careers that were not appropriate for their particular abilities. It is suggested by Male 2 that many career options remained dreams for students and it is assumed that the lack of relevant information and guidance resulted in the perception of these careers only being dreams:

*... something that was happening in the past – we had these dreams of of uh ... being a doctor being a teacher being this and that but then ... (Male 2)*

Very few black students had the financial resources to apply to university. This reality was evident in the interviews. Participants mentioned the challenges associated with deciding on a particular career path, and an additional barrier, the lack of financial resources, made their journey into adulthood even more complicated.

Female 7 commented on this difficult journey. In the extract, her utterance of '*it was hard initially*' referred to the process of finding the appropriate course and then applying to specific universities:

*It was hard initially. To get to university with limited funds ... (Female 7)*

*... and finding the money ... what we needed ... also on our own ... very limited help from others ... (Male 1)*

*... and he was studying there and apparently he had a bursary. And we were in the same class ... in matric ... (Female 5)*

Those students who were fortunate to enter tertiary education, often opted for a so-called 'safe choice' when they finally chose a course at university. This is mentioned by Female 5:

*But I think it's circumstances that led me to ... to opt to education in the end because ... uhmm ... you know, not having money to go further to tertiary institutions ... (Female 5)*

*... due to financial constraints you end up doing something else that you didn't ever think about ... That's what happened to me also, because I remember uhh ... my first choice in terms of training was to become a lawyer. But then when I was in the university just in my first year – just in my first weeks – I noticed that I couldn't afford in terms of paying for the books and all the that, all that stuff ... (Male 2)*

It is suggested that many students decided rather to choose a career that was familiar in order to minimise the possibility of failure and uncertainty which would inevitably have an impact on their limited finances.

#### **5.4.2 Socio-political impact on career experiences**

The socio-political impact on career experiences was diverse when discussed during the interviews. Participants mentioned various aspects such as life in the townships, experiences in the workplace itself, perceptions regarding integration and the lack of African language development due to the apartheid regime.

Male 1 suggested that education and studying during his adolescent years were not necessarily a priority.

*... from our history ... uh about studying in the townships ... my tutor managed to keep me interested in the subject ... and that is really good if you think of our history. You know, many students were not so interested in studying back then ... or they could not afford to or ... maybe they thought they won't be able to do it ... (Male 1)*

He attempted to make sense of it by suggesting that students most probably thought that they would not have the financial resources for a further education and therefore did not see the need to invest in their own education.

These sentiments were shared by Male 4. He plays a role in educating black youths in his college and developed an extra-curricular programme where students benefit from opportunities to work with corporations and to experience life in the city. He implied that the world in a city is deemed as foreign and intimidating to many black youths and therefore their perception about their own abilities are reinforced by the fear of the unknown:

*... the youngsters from school ... mostly uhmmmm black – you know, the youths. My intention is a large number of youngsters have no idea on how to actually get jobs in the city. Number one. And again, they look at those high rising building thinking oh it is not for me ... (Male 4)*

Male 4 also commented on the division in schools which resulted in black youths questioning their own abilities and skills. He used the analogy of '*being passive as black does not mean my brain is black*' to suggest that skin colour does not determine the future outcome of an individual.

Within the workplace, the socio-political history also plays a role. Male 4 implies that black people still experience a glass ceiling in the organisational hierarchy. Despite the efforts of affirmative action, he believes that blacks are only allowed to progress to a certain level in the organisation.

*I'll probably say that there are some there just to make up the numbers ... and black people have a kind of glass ceiling, there is a ceiling, a glass ceiling ... the highest you can reach ... not higher ... (Male 4)*

His suggestion that black workers are employed '*to make up the numbers*', highlights his distrust in programmes attempting to accommodate more black workers in the workplace.

In addition, Male 3 made particular comments about the role of coloured people in the workplace. His perception was that coloured people were advantaged within the apartheid government, and also now, within the new democratic South Africa:

*Exactly ... that was my point, you see ... coloured people ... in the previous government ... if it was the apartheid's government, they were there. Even now, they are still here ... how can I say ... I don't want them to go away, but I mean ... they need to mix ... (Male 3)*

The negative perception is further highlighted by his comment '*they are still here*' and his frustration with them not being able to fully integrate with black workers in the workplace. It is deduced that he suggests that coloured workers choose to be closer to white workers as opposed to black employees which strengthen the negative perception regarding them.

The lack of effective career guidance inevitably had an impact on the career choices of respondents (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe & Hall, 2007). This is clear from the comments made by respondents where they sketched an environment in their youth where effective career guidance practices were absent which resulted in uninformed career choices. This is backed by Rice (2002) who is of the opinion that the role of individual behaviour and the environment is reciprocal and linked with each other.

## **5.5 EXPLORING THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THEORY AND CONTEXT**

In the current investigation, five dimensions of job satisfaction were identified. This includes the interpersonal relations with the supervisor, the importance of acceptance by co-workers, appreciation of autonomy, recognition of competency and skills and the importance of personal development. These dimensions are discussed against the background of the theoretical framework in order to formulate hypotheses associated with the first aim regarding the identification of 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction. Gender differences have been extensively researched but it is noted that this variable cannot be separated from the context such as the role of black females in management positions. The third research aim, where the role of afrocentric values are discussed in terms of work experiences, was also contextualised in terms of the socio-political environment.

### **5.5.1 Dimensions of job satisfaction**

The empirical aim of the investigation was to identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction among black middle level managers. With reference to the current investigation, three approaches were considered in order to identify relevant dimensions of job satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, the dimensions of job satisfaction are divided into situational, dispositional and interactionist approaches. The situational approach highlights the importance of certain characteristics of the job that could contribute to the experience of job satisfaction. The dispositional viewpoint acknowledges the unique personality traits of employees and therefore argues that certain employees will have higher levels of job satisfaction than others. Lastly, the interaction approach follows the assumption that one needs to integrate

both situational and dispositional factors in order to understand the perception of job satisfaction (Cohrs et al., 2006).

The following section highlights the integration of both situational and dispositional factors since some sub-dimensions could be viewed as situational factors whilst others have a dispositional character that is closely related to the personality traits of the individuals.

#### 5.5.1.1 Quality of supervision

From a theoretical perspective it was interesting to observe the interrelated nature of the role of the supervisor as guide or mentor and the importance of communication in the relationship. These two variables were not viewed as separate entities, but rather complementary aspects. Participants made several comments about the supportive and encouraging role their supervisor plays in their daily work environment. The findings from the interviews support the assumption made by Maslow (1943) that belonging needs are important for individuals before they reach the higher levels of self-actualisation. In the data respondents made regular references to the importance of their relationship with their supervisor and that they viewed it as encouraging in their particular workplace. It is suggested that the close working relationship with their supervisor creates a perception of acceptance and belonging. It seems as if the supervisor made a particular effort in supporting the respondents in their daily tasks.

From the literature it is clear that consideration leadership behaviours result in a friendly and supportive work environment (Greene & Schriesheim, 1977; Lawrence, 2007). This type of behaviour is called benevolence and it relates to the way in which the supervisor aims to do good and the way in which these actions are viewed as acceptable by the employee (Bagraim & Hime, 2007). Wood, Chonko and Hunt (1986) are also of the opinion that the way in which supervisors share information and guidelines with employees could contribute to their perception of job satisfaction.

However, from comments made during the interview, it was evident that respondents perceived the close working relationship with the supervisor perhaps on a more personal level or that they view him rather as a team leader than in a formal supervisory or disciplinary role. It is suggested that they experience it as a working relationship with a guide, coach or mentor rather than the acceptance of formal structures within the hierarchy of the organisation which separate employees at different levels. According to Sower

(2011), a team leader exhibits the following characteristics: those of a coach, mentor and active participant. In other words, the role of the coach is not necessarily to be directive, but rather to guide individuals. The team leader becomes the vehicle to communicate and instigate training needed by team members. With reference to a mentor, the team leader becomes the first level of information for team members. The mentor becomes the individual who guides and directs team members into a certain direction. Finally, it is expected of the team leader to be an active participant and to be actively involved in the team. The expectation is that the team leader will support team members in difficulty and problems.

With reference to Herzberg's (1959) Two Factor Theory, it is clear that this main theme is associated with hygiene factors associated with either dissatisfaction or no dissatisfaction and stated that hygiene factors can lead to dissatisfaction. The role of interpersonal relations with the supervisor is seen as one of these extra-job factors. Within the investigation it became clear that not all respondents were equally positive about their supervisors. Some made it clear that they perceived their supervisor as autocratic or reactive. Consequently it was interesting to note that in one conversation the respondent refused to model the behavioural traits of the supervisor. The literature supports this notion that the management style of the supervisor can have a significant impact on the perception of job satisfaction among employees (Ahmad & Yekta, 2010; Bakaş, 2009). Bandura's theory (1986) also applies in terms of learning from experience and the environment. Perceptions formed by participants regarding the unacceptable behavioural traits of their supervisors, supports Bandura's (1986) belief that cognitions also play an integral part in behavioural patterns of observers. Within the mentor role, certain vicarious learning opportunities are created for protégés to imitate (Kram, 1986). It could also be asked whether the difference in experience of members of the in-group versus members of the out-group, as proposed by the Leader Member Exchange Theory (Wayne & Green, 1993), applies here.

#### 5.5.1.2 Co-workers

With reference to the main theme associated with co-workers, two content theories were considered. This includes Maslow's (1946) Hierarchy of Needs, where social needs are deemed important after the satisfaction of physiological and security needs and Herzberg's (1959) Two Factor theory, where co-workers are classified as part of the hygiene factors. This relationship dimension, also highlighted in the previous section, is one of the commonly



identified dimensions of job satisfaction (Herzberg 1959; Maslow, 1954; McClelland et al., 1953).

However, the sub themes within this section manifested in an interesting way since respondents made explicit reference to language as a barrier in the workplace as well as the importance they place on communication. Process theories could also be considered to add in the understanding of the importance of social acceptance for the participants. Within the current investigation, it is argued that both these sub themes are viewed as a manifestation of the role of communication as an integral part of the social needs and social relationship dimension that is deemed unique to the South African context. In the current organisational climate in South Africa, African languages are normally not commonly part of work related discussions which inevitably impact on effective communication. Such problems in turn could be assumed to be strengthened by the cultural background of respondents. No explicit references were made to whether these sub themes are associated with primarily the supervisor, peers or subordinates. As a result, it has been decided to categorise it in general terms (i.e. the influence co-workers have on job satisfaction).

Frustration was evident during the interviews when respondents commented on the limiting effect of language barriers in the workplace. None of the respondents communicate in their mother tongue in the work environment. Thus, communication in a second language as well as the inability to fluently understand the preferred language used in the workplace, resulted in negative perceptions.

According to Fox (2006), words will mean different things to different people. That is the nature of language differences. Aspects such as age, cultural experiences and educational level all contribute to the language spoken by individuals and the meaning they place on words. For example, Stewart and Bennett (1991) asked whether a message not sent in the speaker's mother tongue discloses the same message to the receiver than intended. Since such a message is in need of translation into the second language before being transmitted, a totally different message could be transmitted (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). According to Fox (2006), language differences are not unfamiliar to organisations where employees do not all speak the same language. However it is often overlooked and not properly addressed (Fox, 2006). Such language barriers therefore contribute to impediment of open communication where employees do not speak the same language in the work environment (Henderson, 2010).

As a result, language differences and difficulties create an environment where members cannot debate differences effectively, share common ideas and values and learn from one another. Such differences inevitably lead to frustration and misunderstanding which has a significant negative impact on learning and social interaction within the organisation (Greenberg, Lane & Bahde, 2005).

In the current investigation it was clear that the above mentioned dilemmas affected respondents. From a theoretical viewpoint it can be explained by Locke's (1976) Value Theory. According to Locke (1976), individuals' values will determine their level of job satisfaction. In other words, the theory focuses on what individuals want, desire or value. This theory is therefore viewed as a more interactive explanation to job experiences as opposed to the content theories. Satisfaction will be experienced if values in the workplace are fulfilled. According to the theory, discrepancies between what an individual wants and what they have in the workplace have an impact on satisfaction, depending on the importance of such a facet (Locke, 1976). It is suggested in the current investigation that respondents are integrated within the organisation, but still feel a sense of frustration due to the inability to communicate more effectively with each other. It is suggested that this value or need manifests in a subconscious desire to be accepted within the work environment. The language barrier is partly the manifestation of feeling excluded from the social circle of colleagues.

Rogers (2003), for example, argues that homophily and heterophily exist within organisations. Homophily refers to the extent to which employees within an organisation are similar to each other whilst heterophily refers to the opposite. Heterophily is potentially prevalent in the work environments of participants commenting on the issue of language due to the fact that they feel excluded or find it difficult to express themselves within the work environment. This is supported by Sam and Berry (2006) who argue that there is a reciprocal link between being fluent in a language and being part of a social group. For instance, the more competent the individual becomes with a particular language, the higher the possibility of inclusion in such a social group. Such interpersonal relations consequently have a significant impact on satisfaction (Vigoda, 2000). Knowledge of the spoken language of a social group is also necessary in order to understand and communicate cultural information (Henderson 2010; Sam & Berry 2006). Henderson (2010) therefore argues that intercultural communication is of particular interest when communication between second language individuals takes place.

This also highlights the importance of the acknowledgement of the potential language constraints experienced in the current investigation. As noted earlier, interviews were conducted in the second language of both respondents and interviewer. It is therefore suggested that one needs to pay close attention to comments made by respondents because of the different meanings placed on the spoken word (Fox, 2006). Messages in need of translation before being transmitted or interpreted can lose some of the richness in detail. The researcher acknowledged from the onset of the investigation that language, messages sent and the interpretation of such messages could have an impact on the richness of information obtained. Although the researcher is fluent in both mother tongue and second language, respondents had difficulty expressing themselves during parts of the interview. It is predicted that, if participants had the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue, explanations and examples during the interview would have been more elaborated.

It was also evident that some respondents commented on their efforts of attempting to learn to speak Afrikaans whilst they did not experience the same attitude from their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues. Respondents therefore experienced a lack of fairness since the outcome was not what they expected (Adams, 1963). Frustration was experienced because they made an attempt to learn another language or understand another culture which was not reciprocated.

Closely related with the impact of the language barrier in the workplace is the second sub theme which focuses on the importance of communication in the work environment. An interesting link is found with the first main theme associated with the role of the supervisor. Respondents mentioned the importance of open communication which could be closely linked with their collectivist upbringing where communal values and trust are fundamental to their culture.

From an organisational perspective, it is clear that communication is viewed as central in the work structure. In many cases it is viewed as the variable that connects and binds all the different activities in the organisation into one meaningful unit (Roux, Brynard, Botes & Fourie, 1999). Misunderstanding, inefficiencies and potential inaccuracies are common factors experienced by diverse groups. Communication often breaks down when it is assumed that the other person understands the message which is then not necessarily the case (Mfene, 2010). Haslam (2004) suggests that individuals who share a common self-definition in an organisation should be encouraged and motivated to communicate with each other particularly with reference to the identity shared by both.

Harzing and Freely (2008) are of the opinion that effective communication is a prerequisite to effective management but that it could only be successful with the acceptance of a shared language. As Roux et al. (1999) indicate, due to the heterogeneous nature of South African organisations, communication is complicated by the lack of a common language. This viewpoint is supported by Scollon and Scollon (2001) who argue that intercultural communication is deemed important in any work environment.

Not surprisingly, according to McFarlin et al. (1999), ubuntu has significant implications for organisations since the emphasis is placed on the collective energies of employees. Only with the implementation and acceptance of open discussion forums that allow all employees to participate, will such a culture be established. From a middle level manager's perspective, ubuntu places value on interdependence. Within the African communities, leaders are expected to manage in a less formal manner and to ensure and encourage access to information. It implies that these communities are free of any secrets. The aim of the leaders, therefore, is to encourage open and honest debate which could eventually result in a common decision (McFarlin et al., 1999). As mentioned by Goris (2007), communication satisfaction can therefore have a significant impact on job satisfaction. This viewpoint is echoed by Haslam (2004) who suggests that organisations need to address the social aspect and impact of communication in the organisation since it can change the level of interpersonal relations from basic to a more close interaction where aspects such as emotional support are viewed as important (Eadie, 2009).

#### 5.5.1.3          Autonomy

Job autonomy is defined as the extent to which the job encourages independence, freedom and a degree of discretion to the employee to schedule work and procedures according to his or her needs (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

For example, Kam (1998) is of the opinion that employees who have a high need for independence are more satisfied with high participation in non-repetitive tasks. This is supported by Vigoda (2000) who states that aspects such as interpersonal relationships, high independency needs and a lack of two-way communication have an impact on the job-congruence relationship with satisfaction and performance. For example, it is argued that more autonomy creates an environment where employees experience more freedom to dictate their own work schedule and effort (Nguyen, Taylor & Bradley, 2003). Hackman and

Oldham (1976) support this by stating that there are certain job characteristics that have a significant impact on psychological states. The core characteristics include skill variety; task identity; task significance; feedback and autonomy. With reference to autonomy it places emphasis on the degree an employee has to schedule and organise his work (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

Somewhat unexpectedly, however, respondents only focused on one aspect of autonomy without specific reference to task autonomy which is common in studies of this nature. Participants mentioned a sense of freedom within the general work environment. For example, respondents who commented on this facet suggested that they enjoyed the ability to move freely within their work. They enjoyed the fact that supervisors did not check on them regularly and that they had the ability to move freely within the buildings without having to notify somebody about their movements.

Perhaps a deeper meaning and explanation of the importance of this facet comes from the cultural background of participants. It is suggested that autonomy is also associated with trust in the workplace. The manifestation of trust comes from the basic principles of ubuntu. For example, according to Mbigi and Maree (1995), some of the common management principles associated with African tribal communities and directly linked with ubuntu are aspects such as interdependence, spiritualism and trust. As Koopman (1994) has mentioned, conflict and adversarial relationships are inevitable if there is a lack of morality inherent in trust within the organisation. Bass (1990) therefore argues that the emphasis on leadership has changed from only focusing on the leader's role to including various other factors such as the expectations and perceptions of subordinates within the organisation.

#### 5.5.1.4 Recognition

From a theoretical perspective (Herzberg, 1968) it is argued that motivators encourage individuals to strive for outstanding performance. Such factors include feelings and perceptions of achievement, professional advancement and recognition. Pyres (2009) suggests that these motivators have a positive impact on the experience of job satisfaction. Interestingly, in the current investigation it was evident that the emphasis was not on recognition for a job well done, but rather recognition of qualifications with some reference to and comparison in terms of experience. Although a widely reported dimension of job satisfaction, recognition presents itself in a unique manner against the background of affirmative action.

From a theoretical perspective, respondents' perceptions can be explained by the Equity theory of Adams (1963). Adams (1965) argues that once an employee enters the workplace, an exchange relationship develops between both parties and that employee motivation is influenced by their perception of how fairly they are treated at work. Employees will start to compare themselves with their co-workers within and outside the work environment by calculating the reward-to-effort ratio of co-workers. Pyres (2009) states that if a feeling of inequity develops internalised stress will evolve which could have detrimental effects on motivational levels. With reference to the current context, respondents will compare their input and rewards in the workplace with their colleagues. In other words, they will compare their qualifications and experience with their colleagues and will strive for equity in receiving proportionally similar rewards as their counterparts. Huseman, Hatfield and Miles (1987) suggest three possible behavioural responses to situations of perceived equity or inequity. It includes benevolent individuals who are perceived as altruistic and are content when they are under-rewarded and feel guilty when they are over rewarded; equity-sensitive employees who believe that every person should be treated equitably and entitled employees who argue that everything they receive they deserve.

It was clear from the interviews that some respondents felt the need to openly communicate and discuss their particular skills and competencies in the work environment. It is suggested that possibly these respondents do not receive regular positive feedback about the contributions they make in the workplace. Rahim (2007), for example, focuses on the importance of rewards for competence in the workplace. It is suggested that such practices are necessary for the continuation of the competitive advantage of an organisation since it also directly affects the job attitudes of employees in the work environment. It is therefore no surprise that according to Maslow (1946) esteem needs are met when employees display a positive self-esteem and when they obtain appreciation and recognition from others in the organisation (Daft & Marcic, 2008).

As mentioned previously, the need for recognition should be contextualised against the background of affirmative action. It is suggested that a general struggle for recognition might be one of the consequences of the perceptions created by affirmative action.

Bendix (2001) argues that in many cases where affirmative action has been implemented incorrectly, individuals were appointed mainly to fill quotas or to 'window-dress'. Such incorrect strategies inevitably result in negative perceptions regarding appointees and are reinforced especially when employees cannot cope with the demands of the post (Bendix,

2001). It is against such a background that educated blacks feel frustrated since they believe they have the same standard of education and skills as their counterparts in organisations. This is supported by De Witt, Erasmus and Swanepoel (1998) who argue that many white employees view affirmative action appointees as less capable or experienced than their white colleagues. Motileng, Wagner and Cassimjee (2006) go further by stating that affirmative action employees are accompanied by stereotyping and stigmatisation since others in the company still believe that they are not appointed based on their contributions and skills necessary to do the job well. Brooks (1999) supports this by arguing that affirmative action has an impact on both blacks and whites. An association develops between aspects such as 'window dressing', quotas and tokenism which results in many black employees arguing that they prefer being evaluated according to the same criteria as their white counterparts. It is suggested that in the current investigation inequities are perceived due to respondents' beliefs that they are treated differently in the work environment despite being equally qualified and skilled. The blame is placed on affirmative action and the consequences of such practices in the organisation. It was, however, clear from the interviews that some respondents did see the value of affirmative action and the need to implement it in organisations.

An overarching theme identified is the fact that it seems important to respondents to fit in and be accepted by their co-workers. The question could be asked whether participants experience feelings of inadequacy or possibly inferiority due to affirmative action practices.

#### 5.5.1.5 Personal development

The fifth master theme focuses on the need for personal development in the work environment. Two sub themes evolved from this facet namely individuals' emphasis on self-actualisation and the impact of self-efficacy. The two sub themes are deemed interrelated since both are linked to variables associated with personal development. It was, however, also identified as separate entities since it is believed that the cognitive variable of self-efficacy is not a requirement for self-actualisation and vice versa. An aspect of note in the self-actualisation theme was meaningful work and both sub themes made reference to a form of community service and the ability to empower others.

Participants mentioned the importance of achievement in their work environment. It is acknowledged that achievement per se is not theoretically similar to self-actualisation, but, in

the context of the investigation, it is viewed as a supplementary variable contributing to and enhancing the process of self-actualisation.

All the content theories discussed in the literature overview are associated with either the aspiration towards self-actualisation or the importance of achievement. For instance, in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1946) it is expected that employees will be working within an environment where they are provided with opportunities for growth and responsibility in order to utilise their unique abilities to the utmost (Schultz & Schultz, 1998). With reference to McClelland's (1961) Achievement Motivation Theory, the emphasis is placed on the degree of the need for achievement in order to experience satisfaction. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1959) also states that achievement and possibility of growth are associated with job factors called motivators.

Evans (1998) holds an interesting viewpoint regarding Herzberg's (1968) motivators. The author argues that specifically four motivators (i.e. advancement; the work itself; recognition and responsibility) all filter down to one key job fulfilment variable, namely achievement. The author argues that the four motivators are rather seen as reinforcers to achievement. Evans (1998) states that recognition in the form of feedback, for example, reinforces the perception of a job well done which then results in a perception that work is done to an acceptable standard which consequently determines a sense of personal achievement.

The need for achievement, as highlighted by McClelland et al. (1953), refers to the individual's desire to accomplish a particular goal and to excel in whatever he pursues. According to McClelland et al. (1953), individuals who display a high need to achieve share certain characteristics such as working in an environment where they are responsible for solving certain problems; they are comfortable in taking calculated risks; they set realistic goals and they need continuous feedback and recognition of their progress made.

An interesting link has developed with reference to these characteristics and the fourth main theme of recognition. It is clear that respondents do value feedback and recognition of their progress and therefore it is of no surprise that the facet of recognition is identified in the data. Once again it is suggested that sub themes and main themes are connected within the current investigation.

It is argued that all the dimensions highlighted in the investigation are placed within the context of the socio-political and cultural environment in which respondents live. Therefore the need for self-actualisation can be viewed as a motivator for more than just recognition



and the need to reach one's full potential. It can potentially be argued that the need for achievement or growth is a subconscious manifestation of the desire to display the ability to rise above certain circumstances, perceptions or barriers in order to be viewed as an expert or the best in the field.

The second sub theme, self-efficacy, is associated with the Social Learning Theory. Bandura (1986) suggests a triage consisting of the behaviour, characteristics and environment of an individual in reciprocal functioning with each other (Bandura, 1986). It is argued that social, cognitive and behaviour skills need to be included into certain actions in order to exert some form of control over an individual's life. When an individual has the ability to successfully utilise these three skills, it directly influences the personal efficacy which results in a level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Thus, self-efficacy can be explained as 'people's judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances' (Bandura, 1986 p. 391).

According to Wexler (2001) self-efficacy is associated with user acceptance of the individual's self-belief. In other words, it is the belief that the individual is capable to behave in a certain way in order to obtain a chosen goal (Omrod, 2006). Self-efficacy determines how individuals use cognitions and emotions to motivate themselves to behave in a certain way. Cognitive, motivational, selection and affective processes all contribute to the level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

Bandura (1977) is of the opinion that individuals with a high level of self-efficacy will view a challenging aspect as something to be conquered rather than something to avoid. The opposite is true for those with a low level of self-efficacy. It is important to note that self-efficacy focuses on the individual's belief of what he is capable of doing and not on knowing what to do. Within the context of the current investigation it was clear that respondents mentioned examples in their daily lives and in the workplace where they are prepared to take responsibility and to take action if needed. Once again it can be argued that the history of the participants cannot be placed separate from such comments. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5.4

Bandura (1994) suggests that a high level of self-efficacy will contribute to an individual's well-being and can increase personal accomplishment and success. Those with high levels of self-efficacy will therefore be challenged to complete difficult tasks instead of avoiding it. Such individuals normally set themselves difficult goals and have a strong focus on completing and succeeding in such tasks. It is argued that individuals will set themselves

goals based on their self-evaluation of their own capabilities. The higher the perceived level of self-efficacy, the more challenging the goals and consequently the more committed such individuals are to achieve such goals.

In the conversations it became clear that respondents valued a sense of community service. Others commented on their ability to empower others and to contribute to their well-being and growth. This is supported by Fourie and Van Eeden (2010) who found similar indications from interviews with 20 participants across South Africa. Participants mentioned in their views that it was sensible and meaningful to serve the community, to do something fulfilling or to be a role player in adding value to somebody. Savolaine and Granello (2002) state that individuals' aspirations are often linked to a need to be involved in the community. Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) furthermore argue that one of the main feature of humans remain the search for meaning.

Similarly the need to empower others is supported in the research of Fourie and Van Eeden (2010). Participants made reference to their need to empower others or to transfer skills to someone else. This is linked with personal control in an individual. Renshon (1979) is of the opinion that all individuals have a desire to have an impact on people and consequently have a personal need for control. Fourie and Van Eeden (2010) argue that once an individual has developed a sense of personal control, a belief in the ability to have an impact on others will follow.

The first aim of the investigation was to identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, interview questions were selected based on current literature and theories concerned with the identification of factors associated with job satisfaction. Therefore, results in the main themes are not of any surprise. However, the manifestation of these main themes is of interest. It is suggested that these dimensions are not viewed as 'new', but rather widely reported dimensions that manifest in a unique way in the South African context and in the personal lived experiences of the respondents. This includes social needs against the background of ubuntu; the related need for effective communication to build trust and relationships against the background of language barriers experienced in the workplace; the need for recognition against the background of perceptions created by affirmative action; self-actualisation linked to meaningful contributions in the local context and self-efficacy linked to empowerment of others against the background of ubuntu and the local context.

### **5.5.2 Gender differences in sources of job satisfaction**

The second research aim focused on the identification of any qualitative gender differences associated with job satisfaction. Gender differences were found in four of the main themes bar recognition.

It is clear from the literature that satisfaction with interpersonal relations with the supervisor can contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction (d'Agostino & Levine, 2010). Within the current investigation it was clear that mostly females commented on the supportive role of the supervisor in their daily work environment. This is supported by Mottaz (1986) who found that females value supportive supervision more than males. However, the contrary is also true since Williams and Dellinger (2010) found no gender differences with regards to having a supportive supervisor and supportive co-workers. These aspects, however, are positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Mixed findings in the literature exist regarding the influence of the sex of the supervisor on the relationship with the subordinate. According to Wayne, Liden and Sparrow (1994) there is evidence that suggests that employees that have a same-sex supervisor will have a higher quality Leader Membership Exchange (LMX) than those who have supervisors of the opposite sex. Interestingly Varma and Stroh (2001) found that higher satisfaction correlation levels exist between females with female supervisors than females with male supervisors. In the current investigation, however, all participants had a male supervisor. A possible suggestion for the importance of such a supportive role could possibly stem from these participants' cultural background where the male elders are viewed as the leaders within society and where they deserve respect and obedience (Mbigi, 1995).

Males were more vocal about the negative characteristics and actions displayed by their supervisors. According to Henley (1977) there is a power relationship between supervisors and subordinates. Actions between these two role players are highlighted and enhanced by the power relationships between them. For instance, Henley (1977) argues that females are taught from a young age to display subordinate, (i.e. feminine) behavioural traits. As an employee or supervisor it is therefore expected of the female worker not to dominate or criticise since it resembles more unfeminine characteristics. Not only can reinforced gender roles have an impact on males' tendency to criticise their supervisor, but aspects such as communication styles could also affect it. LaPlante and Ambady (2002) suggest that job satisfaction and productivity of subordinates depend on the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of their supervisor. Interestingly, the gender of the supervisor is also deemed important. For

example, it was found that male supervisors were rated the highest when they gave feedback in a positive way. It is apparently especially true for male subordinates who receive this information from their supervisors. LaPlante and Ambady (2002) argue that men become more defensive if they perceive that they are being criticised by other men. Renwick (1977) is also of the opinion that it is expected of male supervisors to openly comment or criticise unacceptable behaviour of subordinates, but interestingly, the same is not expected of female supervisors. This could perhaps explain the possible gender differences in the current investigation. Male subordinates might be more critical towards same sex supervisors and female managers are conditioned to give feedback perhaps in a less assertive and critical way. Therefore, in the current investigations, females were reluctant to openly comment on traits or behaviour not acceptable to them.

Females were also more vocal about their need to be included within the social realm in the work environment. This is evident in the second main theme, namely the role of co-workers in the workplace. Comments were made about being excluded from the social interactions in the work environment, but references also focused on the language barrier that could isolate employees from other work opportunities. It is suggested that a general theme of acceptance and belonging were manifested in their explicit references to the language barrier in the workplace. Nieva and Gutek (1981) for instance found that females place more emphasis on aspects such as social relationships and acceptable working conditions as opposed to males who value pay and promotion. It is also observed that females promote a more interactive leadership style with importance placed on the positive interactions with subordinates. It is furthermore suggested that females are concerned about participation, to encourage the development of self-worth in individuals and to share information and power (Wilson, 2003).

It has been suggested that females find social support more influential in the workplace than their male counterparts. For example, networking has been perceived as a tool to enhance perceptions of competence and self-worth (Wilson, 2003). In a study done by Selnow and Wilson (1985) it was found that females place higher emphasis on social relationships than males. Interestingly Warr (2007) is of the opinion that females value self-validation in terms of social relationships more than males. It is argued that females search for some form of identity through social support in relationships.

Only the males commented on their frustration of attempting to fit into the so-called 'white culture' by means of learning to speak Afrikaans or to, even, socialise with white colleagues on their terms and interests. April and Smit (2010) argue that often an interest or curiosity

leads to employees seeking out challenges to test their own boundaries and values which result in them being willing to embark on efforts over and above what is expected of them within the work context. As mentioned in the Social Learning Theory, a reciprocal relationship exists between an individual's own cognitions, behaviour and the environment (Bandura, 1986). In the current investigation the expectation of reciprocity is evident in the male comments that they do not perceive their white counterparts as making an effort to know and understand their values, language or interests.

Closely related to the impact of the language barrier and the need for acceptance, was the emphasis placed, mostly by females, on the importance of communication in the workplace. With reference to leadership styles, it was found that it seems as if female managers and leaders display leadership styles which strive for harmony in order to minimise the social distance between themselves and others in the organisation. It has been found that female leaders find it easier to share and to disclose information about themselves. They strive for a flatter structure in an organisation in order to be able to share information more easily (Wilson, 2003). In addition, in a study done by Carlson and Mellor (2004), it was found that females value a more supportive and caring workgroup than males. The existence of good working relations is also associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among females. Warr (2007) supports this by mentioning that females value reciprocal supportive relationships within the work environment whilst males are more focused on autonomy.

Nguyen, Taylor and Bradley (2003) are of the opinion that autonomy enhances the overall perception of job satisfaction and that there are significant gender differences in the perception of autonomy. Within the current investigation it was clear that only male participants mentioned the fact that they experienced and valued freedom of movement within the work environment. They did not explicitly refer to their particular tasks, but did implicitly mention the fact that they are not regularly checked up on. This is supported by Jacobsen (1998) who found that males rated their jobs higher in terms of challenge, variety and autonomy. Males also display a higher need for control in their work environment than females (Pugliesi, 1995).

Females on the other hand suggested factors such as freedom to take time off from work and relations with co-workers as significant (Jacobsen, 1998). A study done by Clark (2005) found that females mentioned flexible working hours, being helpful to society and being of help to other people as influential in their perceptions of job satisfaction. This is supported by a British study conducted by Sloane and Williams (2000) who found that females rated accommodating working hours and interpersonal relations as important factors in the

workplace. These studies support the findings from the current investigation where only females commented on their appreciation of being able to have time off outside the normal working hours. References to time being available to spend on research, or in another case, time provided by the organisation to use at own leisure, were noted during the interviews.

Literature suggests that females are still more involved with their children even though they get support from their husbands and that the traditional role of homemaker is still associated with females (Broers 2005; Pocock 2005). It was, however, interesting from the study that no reference to potential difficulty in managing work and family life was made. Also no references were made about role conflict. When viewing the demographic data of the study, it is clear that only one female is married as opposed to three others who are not. This could be a possible explanation for the lack of reference to any aspect of work-family-conflict or role conflict. Another possible suggestion is the consideration of Super's (1990) lifespan theory where the emphasis is placed on multiple roles and that females have different emotional outlets with reference to their abilities, values and interests.

Gaining recognition is the fourth main theme identified in the current investigation. In the two sub themes, recognition of competency and affirmative action based on ability, no gender differences were found.

These findings can be contextualised in terms of several studies. According to Chiu (1998), a possible explanation for no gender differences within the theme of gaining recognition lies with the fact that males and females will be more similar at the higher levels of the organisation as opposed to the lower levels. It is argued that females will hold similar expectations of the job than their male counterparts. According to Gregory (1990), when variables such as age, level in the organisation and educational levels are considered, no significant gender differences between managers exist. This is supported by a study done by Bowen et al. (2008) where no gender differences were found regarding recognition received from the supervisor.

Within the master theme of personal development, gender differences were identified in certain sub sections. The need to be challenged within the workplace and the importance of feelings of accomplishment were mentioned by both males and females. This is supported by Johnson, McClure and Schneider (1999) who found no gender differences with reference to intellectually challenging work and a fast-paced work environment. The rating of the importance of these variables, however, did differ.

Mostly males commented on the importance of growth taking place and the recognition of them being the best in what they do. With reference to the female emphasis placed on communication and males' need for self-actualisation, Eagly (1987) proposes the socialisation theory where it is suggested that males and females grew up in societies with different expectations. For example, females are brought up to develop social values and skills whilst males are encouraged to be more assertive. This could possibly explain males' need for achievement and success which results in self-actualisation (Mason, 1997). Murray and Atkinson (1981) found in an analysis of eight research studies that females value social interaction while males identified extrinsic factors such as pay and advancement. Contrary to this, however, Wilson (2003) found that successful females value intrinsic factors such as challenging tasks in their work environment.

Only female participants displayed an intention and history towards self-efficacy. Interestingly, according to Hackett and Betz (1981), the traditional female experience of socialisation reduced their career-related self-efficacy expectations. As a result it is argued that females have lower levels of self-efficacy – especially in male-dominated careers. In order for individuals, and then in this case, females, to increase the level of self-efficacy, it is important that they attempt to increase these perceptions in an emotionally safe and secure environment where opportunities are created for learning and achievement (White, 2006).

According to Bandura (1977), there are three dimensions of self-efficacy which are the level of self-efficacy, the strength and the generality. The past experiences of the individual with reference to success and failure contributes to the development of certain expectations regarding the individual's own abilities (Sherer & Maddux, 1982).

A possible suggestion for female only reference to self-efficacy in the current investigation once again lies with the socio-political and historical variables associated with their behavioural traits. Being in a middle management role, it could be perceived that they deserve 'no favours' and that they are expected to adapt into a traditional male-dominated work environment. By displaying high levels of self-efficacy, these females demonstrate the ability and skills to 'look after themselves' and deliver acceptable results in their respective organisations.

Findings in the current investigation suggest that there are gender differences with reference to the role of the supervisor. Mostly females commented on the supportive role of the supervisor whilst only one male implied such a work relationship. Only males were found critical towards certain unacceptable behavioural traits of their supervisor. Within the main

theme of the role of co-workers, it was clear that females commented on the impact of the language barrier with reference to exclusion of the social circle as well as of certain work opportunities. Males, on the other hand, commented specifically on their frustration in attempting to understand other cultures in the workplace, but that they do not perceive the same effort from their counterparts. Communication as a tool to be included and accepted in the workplace was highlighted mainly by female participants who value open communication as an effective behavioural trait in the organisation. Within the third sub theme of autonomy it was clear that only males commented on the need for freedom within the work environment. Suggestions made by females only referred to the ability to be away from the work environment during certain times of the week. With reference to recognition, no gender differences were found regarding recognition of qualifications or affirmative action based on ability. Within the fifth main theme, personal development, it was found that mostly males valued growth and a need for success in the work environment whilst, surprisingly, it was females who commented and suggested their higher levels of self-efficacy.

### **5.5.3 The impact of acculturation on job satisfaction**

The third research aim of the current study was to identify any afrocentric values of significant importance in the experience of job satisfaction among black middle level managers. From the interviews it became clear that the proposed sub themes emerged into one meaningful unit where perceptions and experiences are linked with each other. It is therefore proposed not to identify the sub themes as separate entities, but rather to view it as an interactive holistic phenomenon.

Noordin and Jusoff (2010) are of the opinion that culture will have an impact on an individual's reaction to the environment. These behavioural patterns originate in a set of shared values which could differ from one group to another. Jaeger (1990) therefore believes that an individual's goals, views and interests will be shaped by the culture he belongs to. These different perceptions are highlighted by Hofstede (1980) who views individualistic societies as competitive and self-centred. The emphasis is on obtaining individual goals and encouraging a low need for dependency. The focus is on the individual rather than on the group. Managers from collectivist cultures will focus more on interpersonal relationships than the outcomes of work-related tasks (Jackson, 2002). Koopman (1994) claims that so-called cold approaches are associated with typical white-dominated organisations. Within a collectivist culture on the other hand, members of the organisation view the organisational goals as common. Values such as interdependence and loyalty are common within this belief system (Hofstede, 1980). This is supported by



Khoza (1994) who argues that white managers often still support European value systems which are not complementary to African values and beliefs. Mbigi (1997) is of the opinion that a more afrocentric approach to management in organisations should be considered since it is evident from research that employees from different cultures will display different attitudes towards their work (Jackson, 2002). As a result, Silverthorne (2005) argues that individuals from different cultures in an organisation will inevitably deal with problems differently and will propose different solutions to deal with such challenges.

Participants displayed a particular need towards mutual understanding of cultural values. This particular need is not necessarily only associated with the workplace, but rather emphasis was placed on interaction at different levels of society which could directly impact on work attitudes and perceptions at work.

Comments made by participants also illustrated the gradual process of acculturation that is taking place in their own personal experiences. Experiences of conflict of cultural values and the need and desire for mutual understanding are possibly a manifestation of the fluctuation between the traditional cultural values and the organisational values normally associated with Western standards and practices.

Sam and Berry (2006) define acculturation as 'a process of cultural and psychological change that results from the continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds' (p. 11). In order to fully understand the process of acculturation, Sam and Berry (2006) argue that one needs to take into consideration the cultural context of the given situation. This includes aspects such as the socio-political background of the groups involved. Often acculturation within the work environment takes place since the employee is forced to adapt and to adopt certain culture-specific requirements or skills in order to act effectively in another culture (Bochner, 1972). This is supported by Human (1996) who believes that many Africans who move from rural towns to cities behave according to the situation since their behaviour depends on whether they are with their family or in the work environment (Silverthorne, 2005). Eurocentric values are then adopted since individuals become more individualistic in more affluent environments and societies (Triandis, 1989). This is supported by an example of the Malaysian economy where rapid economic growth resulted in the development of a new middle class who adopted more individualistic values due to increased mobility and financial independence (Jesudason, 1989).

Culture is a complex phenomenon which is enhanced by historical and socio-political variables. From the recent investigation it was clear that cultural values are still prevalent

within the social and personal realm of participants, but in many cases they choose to conform to the more individualistic practices of the organisations they are associated with. However, it is clear that such a slow process of acculturation and the consequent fluctuation between the traditional and the new cannot be viewed in isolation. Participants still placed emphasis on some traditional values and the conflict they experience within the work environment where such traits are not necessarily accommodated and fully understood. This resulted in their desire for a greater need for mutual understanding of different cultural practices and expectations. However, acculturation in the South African context might not just refer to an African value system adapting to Western work values, but rather respondents requesting mutual acculturation with the creation of a unique culture be it in work or other contexts.

#### **5.5.4 Contextualisation of socio-political and historical influences**

In order to understand the lived experiences and comments made by participants in more depth and detail, it is argued that the socio-political and historical environment need to be addressed. Burr (2003) argues that knowledge is maintained by social interactions and therefore emphasis should be placed on the historical and cultural relevance of our worldviews. For example, economic and political disorders have a direct impact on all society members – young and old (Finchilescu & Dawes, 2001).

As an introductory question participants were asked to share a short personal and work history with the interviewer. From the data it was evident that many of the participants referred back to their experiences within schools and townships and their efforts in obtaining tertiary qualifications. The importance of these significant behavioural traits is supported by Cole and Cole (1993) who argue that adolescence is a transitional period in preparation for adulthood. The vision is towards the future and adolescents require appropriate schooling and preparation for the entry into adulthood with reference to careers, work, relationships and so forth. However, within the South African context, adolescents in the 1980s and 1990s grew up with political actions focusing on political change (Finchilescu & Dawes, 2001). To no surprise, Watson and Stead (2001) therefore also mention that politics has been closely associated with the main educational policies in South Africa. Such interventions resemble inequalities, discrimination on a racial and financial level and tight political manipulation. With the introduction of 'Bantu Education', the ruling party paved the way for the creation of certain careers in line with the labour needs of that time. Thus 'Bantu Education' became government's answer to certain labour requirements (Watson &

Stead, 2001). The natural result of such political policies was young children rioting against government policies (Watson & Stead, 2001).

One sub theme that emerged from the interview was the lack of effective career guidance in respondents' youth.

*'... but they didn't give us any guidance career wise, those teachers ...'* (Female 5)

Career education in South Africa was limited and restricted. Due to the restrictive and forced nature of certain subjects being taught, students were not prepared for the world of work (Watson & Stead, 2001).

*'... basically I took it (accounting) to matric but had no idea what you do with it ...'*  
(Male 1)

The authors argue that the restricted career guidance offered in both white and black schools was the result of the ruling party's goal to manipulate and control perceptions of the world of work. For example, black students were conditioned to conform to the norms within society and the workplace. It is argued that career guidance practices failed to encourage students to develop their own internal locus of control and to improve their level of self-efficacy (Watson & Stead, 2001).

Watson and Stead (2001) also mention that the understanding and appreciation of the career choices available are closely related to how individuals integrate their personal development into a specific career choice. Watson and Stead (2001) are of the opinion that the career choice process is interactive and closely linked to the context in which individuals live. This is supported by Finchilescu and Dawes (2001) who argue that the reactions of adolescents are directly correlated with systems in society in which they grow up in such as family, peers, schools and the community. For example, Tunmer (1972) reported that one of the most popular reasons black students from Soweto gave for their particular career choice was to help their people or the nation.

*'... people were saying they are going to study either teaching and nursing...'*  
(Female 5)

Within the South African context young people were racially segregated and enjoyed different opportunities and educational resources. Individual career development in South

Africa is therefore askew due to the availability of different career choices and paths for the youth (Watson & Stead, 2001). In order to understand the theoretical implications on career choices and development it is necessary to acknowledge the dependence on contextual variables (Watson & Stead, 2001).

*'... and finding the money ... what we needed ... also on our own ... very limited help from others ... (Male 1)*

Against the background of the first sub theme, the interrelationship with the second sub theme is evident. Lack of effective support and guidance at secondary level affect perceptions of one's own abilities and potential options available in the future.

To no surprise, Finchilescu and Dawes (2001) found in their research that the adolescent's perception of his future is often determined by the political and economic context of that time. The political environment and potential change have a significant impact on adolescents since it creates an environment of stimulation and a confirmation of their own identities (Erikson, 1986). It is argued that any ideology associated with that specific time period has the ability to influence adolescents. Such influences could be either positive or negative (Erikson, 1986).

*'... from our history ... uh about studying in townships ...' (Male 1)*

Van Niekerk and Van Daalen (1991) therefore argue that the historical context in South Africa has disadvantaged many young people who did not have the opportunity to invest in career research and to engage in stable long-term career choices

It is argued that the dimensions of job satisfaction, the impact of cultural values as well as the possible gender differences associated with job satisfaction are not separate entities which are viewed in isolation of the lived experiences of respondents in the past. Therefore attention was paid to the impact of past factors on the world of work. From the interviews it was clear that participants did have difficulty in attempting to pursue an educational future and to make informed career choices. The lack of effective and integrated career guidance had a profound impact on the respondents' youth and consequently, often indirectly, affected their reactions and behaviour within the workplace.

## Summary

The research aims of the current investigation was to identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction, to investigate any qualitative gender differences associated with job satisfaction and to identify any 'afrocentric' values associated with job satisfaction.

The chapter presented the results from the semi-structured interviews. Dimensions of job satisfaction were not deemed 'new' but rather a unique manifestation of widely reported themes in the literature. This included social needs, the need for effective communication, need for recognition, self-actualisation and the role of self-efficacy. Sub themes elaborated and contextualised interrelated variables in more depth and detail. Gender differences were analysed and only in the main theme of autonomy were no gender differences identified. With reference to cultural values it was found that respondents experience conflict between the Western values and expectations and their own traditional viewpoints. This resulted in a need for mutual understanding of different cultural practices. Importantly it was noted that the former is all included into the slow process of acculturation as experienced by respondents in the current investigation which suggests the development of a unique 'new' culture in the South African context. The socio-political context of the past and current environment was deemed important and placed comments and respondents' suggestions in a more understanding light. Participants made special reference to the lack of effective career guidance during their adolescence and the impact of the socio-political context on their career choices.

The chapter concludes with a discussion in terms of the literature associated with the three empirical aims.

Chapter 6 focuses on the conclusion based on the findings, a reflection on the limitations of the research project, as well as recommendations for further literature studies or applications in organisations.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Conclusions and findings from the investigation are discussed in this chapter. Where appropriate, recommendations for further research and investment are offered.

#### **6.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The study set out to investigate any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction experienced by black middle level managers. From an organisational perspective it was argued that cultural and contextual differences should be acknowledged in such an exploration and therefore emphasis was also placed on an investigation into any significant afrocentric values identified as important in the work environment. These focus points were deemed important since it suggested that many African workers behave according to the context and environment they work and live in. The literature suggested two sets of values – those experienced at work and those implemented in the work environment (Human, 1996). In addition, cultural and contextual differences were highlighted as important since it is argued that many employers still fail to understand the link and influence of the work and non-work precincts employees exist in (Khoza, 1994). Since the majority of South African organisations are still viewed as individualistic by nature (Lessem 1994), it was deemed important to identify those afrocentric values perceived as significant by black employees. The management of diverse needs and values becomes increasingly challenging if no effort is made to understand and possibly integrate different value systems in the workplace (Johnson & Johnson, 2003).

In addition, it was of interest to find out if any qualitative differences in job satisfaction exist between male and female black middle level managers. Historically the majority of research studies focusing on job satisfaction were conducted on predominantly male samples (Fricko & Beehr, 1992). Due to the increasing numbers of females not only in the workplace, but also in managerial positions, it is deemed important to investigate the dimensions of job satisfaction also from a female perspective. The importance of gender differences and its potential negative consequences are also highlighted in the unique South African context where increasingly more black female managers are appointed in a white, male dominated environment (Auster, 2001). Gender is therefore contextualised not only from an organisational perspective, but equally importantly, from a cultural viewpoint.

In the investigation special attention was paid to the role of middle level managers in the organisation since the importance of this role in the hierarchy cannot be underestimated due to its significance in communicating policies and decisions to employees at lower levels. Such responsibilities contribute to the view that middle level managers are perceived as refiners of senior managements' plans and policies (Foy, 1994; Partridge, 1989). Within the context of the current investigation, the role and impact of the middle level manager are significant due to the past and current socio-political variables impacting organisations on a daily basis. The middle level managers' role in communicating and translating organisational goals and perspectives – often as a result of political or economic interference – cannot be understated.

## **6.2 RESEARCH AIMS**

The main aims of the empirical investigation were:

- To identify any 'new' dimensions of job satisfaction highlighted by black middle level managers.
- To investigate any qualitative differences in job satisfaction between male and female black middle level managers.
- To identify any afrocentric values of significant importance to the experience of job satisfaction among black middle level managers.

### **6.2.1 Brief overview of the research methodology**

As mentioned earlier, various qualitative theoretical frameworks were considered for the investigation. For instance, grounded theory was deemed inappropriate since the process focuses on the development of an abstract theory based on certain processes or interaction of participants (Creswell, 2009) rather than a primary focus on the lived experiences of respondents. Consequently, aspects of narrative analysis could have been considered to address certain research questions. It is argued that since the aim of such a theoretical framework is for participants to provide life stories, stories focusing on their history and socio-political context could have been appropriate. The ontological status of narrative analysis is relevant (Smith, 2004), but such an approach does not guide a participant towards a particular aspect in their stories and therefore it could not guarantee that respondents would address variables such as culture, their history and so forth. Similarly features of discourse analysis were appraised. Appropriately to the investigation, this framework argues that language is a tool to construct aspects of the social reality

participants live in (Smith, 2004). The purpose of this approach is to consider the language of the participant in identifying explanations for their lived experiences. However, due to the different levels of language abilities and skills of participants communicating in their second language, it was argued that discourse analysis would place an advantage upon those respondents who are better able to express themselves than others.

Various reasons supported the use of IPA in the investigation. Constructionism was used where data was constructed by both the respondent and researcher (Silverman, 2006). As mentioned by Smith et al. (2009), the use of the semi-structured interview in the investigation created an opportunity for the researcher to encourage respondents to contribute to richer detailed answers.

IPA is strongly associated with symbolic interactionism where the researcher is given a personal perspective on the processes of how participants understand their personal and social environments. The focus remains on the process of how meanings are created by respondents (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

This theoretical framework also acknowledges the expertise of respondents when suggesting a deeper understanding of their feelings, experiences and thought processes (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). It suggests that there is no objective information regarding any experience or event, rather individuals' experiences are affected by their perceptions and, to an extent, inhibited by social constructions (Foster, 2009). IPA provided the researcher with the opportunity to act as co-interpreter in the double hermeneutical process. This implies that the researcher had the opportunity to make sense of respondents' comments and to contextualise it within the current and past South African socio-political and historical environment. IPA provided the investigator with the opportunity to investigate different, complex viewpoints (Creswell, 2009) as illustrated for example with the multi-layered factors such as culture and acceptance, linked with job satisfaction.

A fourth reason for the usefulness of IPA in the current investigation is the analytical focus of the framework. The method adopted by the researcher focused on a reactive process in the hermeneutical circle of analysis and interpretation. In other words, the researcher had the opportunity to interpret the sense making of the respondents (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, in this investigation, supported by the double hermeneutical process, the investigator, for example, had the ability to identify a deeper meaning to suggestions about language issues where it was clear that social acceptance manifested in such comments.



It is concluded that IPA provides the researcher with new perspectives and viewpoints regarding a specific phenomenon, as personally experienced by respondents. It is therefore, in a sense, free from the impact and potential bias of existing theories and frameworks (Foster, 2009).

## **6.2.2 Conclusions and recommendations regarding ‘new’ dimensions of job satisfaction, gender differences and the role of acculturation among black middle level managers**

A number of conclusions have been drawn from the investigation into ‘new’ dimensions of job satisfaction, gender differences and the role of culture among respondents. Although recommendations are offered, it is suggested that these are viewed as secondary to the results.

### **6.2.2.1 The identification of ‘new’ dimensions of job satisfaction against the background of afrocentric values and the socio-political context**

The findings of the investigations suggested firstly the importance of social needs of the participants which should be viewed against the background of ubuntu. Participants indicated a need to be included within the social realm in the work environment and suggested that aspects such as open and effective communication could affect the development of trust relationships between employees – specifically those from different cultural backgrounds (McFarlin et al., 1999). This is in line with the fundamental beliefs of ubuntu where unity, supportiveness and sharing are viewed as the cornerstone of human relations (Mbigi & Maree, 1995). According to ubuntu, without the acceptance of trust in the work environment, conflict and detrimental relationships could affect the work environment (Koopman, 1994). Furthermore, within this context, the role and importance of the supervisor cannot be understated since he is viewed as a vehicle to promote open communication (Sower, 2011) and to assist in the guidance and mentoring of black employees. Against the background of ubuntu the supervisor could resemble the important position of leaders in the community where trust is placed in those at a higher level in the social hierarchy (McFarlin et al., 1999). Effective communication has been closely linked with the significance and restrictions of the language barrier experienced by black employees. Such challenges and difficulties where messages are firstly translated (Stewart & Bennett, 1991) contribute to a perception of exclusion and exclusivity in certain social

circles in the workplace which could impact directly on the impediment of open communication (Henderson, 2010).

It is suggested that organisations should pay closer attention to the need for open communication channels within different departments. McFarlin, Coster and Mogale-Pretorius (1999) are of the opinion that the impact of ubuntu has significant repercussions for organisations. Due to the need to embrace communal African values, it is suggested that organisations implement the regular use of open forums where colleagues could discuss work-related issues in a non-threatening environment. Such forums could be implemented initially within departments but could eventually be extended across different sections of the organisation. This will encourage a more cohesive approach towards the attainment of organisational goals and objectives (Mfene, 2010). In addition, organisations need to be continuously aware of the potential barriers experienced by employees who do not communicate in the chosen language of the organisation. According to the National Language Policy Framework (<http://www.info.gov.za>) there are 25 different spoken languages in South Africa of which 11 have official status. As a result, organisations need to establish an integrated language service within the organisation which could assist not only black employees, but also encourage white workers to consider investing in learning a black language. Such services could help employees with report writing, communication strategies as well as the ability to express themselves more effectively in the workplace. Such services could be integrated within team-building activities in order to establish a closer link between employees.

The need for recognition of qualifications was valued against the background of potential negative perceptions created by affirmative action policies and practices. Although affirmative action practices were implemented in organisations to address the inequalities of the past (Tinarelli, 2000), it is argued that in many cases it is viewed as degrading and undermining black employees' contributions made to the organisation (Motiling, Wagner & Cassimjee, 2006). These feelings of inequity can contribute to tension and dissatisfaction with direct impact on motivational levels (Pyres, 2009). This is in line with the view of De Witt, Erasmus and Swanepoel (1998) who suggest that black employees could experience feelings of frustration since they are viewed as less capable than their other colleagues. This supports Rogers' (2003) viewpoint that homophily and heterophily – perhaps on an unconscious level - still exist in organisations. These findings once again suggest a manifestation of the need for social acceptance in the work environment where black employees feel the need to be included and part of the structure of the organisation – socially and on an educational level.

In order to address the misconceptions regarding affirmative action candidates, it is suggested that organisations pay closer attention to their support systems in place for such candidates. Such an approach should be across all levels of the organisation and should aim to not only assist candidates in coping with work-related demands, but also mentor and guide them towards professional development, if needed (Thomas, 2002). Also an organisation needs to deal with the challenge of defining merit and the acknowledgement of the influence of culture when defining it. An objective standard in distributing resources is therefore questionable. Also, one needs to ask the question whether merit is a socially acceptable variable since it could lead to undesirable social consequences (Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk, 2008). In order to address issues of perception of inadequacy or inferiority, Cushman and King (1995) argue that more methodical approaches associated with work-based competency appraisal are needed. Such assessment will formally regulate prior experience and learning of workers. Such methods will lead to the creation of opportunities where workers can illustrate their competencies in the work environment. It is therefore suggested that when organisations recognise the competency of their employees it creates the impression that the organisation value such individuals and their specific skills (Rahim 2007).

Personal development played an integral part in the results. Respondents' need for self-actualisation was linked to emphasis placed on a meaningful contribution with special reference to the local context. From the data it was clear that participants valued not only their own personal development and growth, but also the potential impact they have on their local communities. Adding value to the lives of others is in support of the findings of Fourie and Van Eeden (2010). Although having a potential impact on the organisation as middle level managers, it is clear that respondents also valued a deeper meaning. Heine, Proulx and Vohs (2006) argue that the main need for humans remain the search for meaning. In the current context it is argued that respondents place this need within the social realm they potentially grew up in or are familiar with. It is seen as a way of 'giving back' to the community. This is in line with the principles of ubuntu where the central belief remains the importance of looking after one another, care and working together in order to strive for the common good of communities (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

Self-actualisation is associated with continuous growth and development in order to assist the optimal functioning of the individual (Cilliers & Kossuth, 2004). Organisations should be aware of such needs of their employees. Particular attention should be paid to workers at the higher levels of the hierarchy. Organisations cannot fall into the trap of assuming high motivational levels of employees at higher levels in the hierarchy. Constant effort should go

into creating opportunities for growth and advancement despite having achieved managerial success. Such needs should be discussed annually and form part of the continuous professional development programme of each individual in the organisation. Human Resources should view such needs holistically and contribute to the development of employees by implementing sufficient training and developmental sessions in accordance with growth targets identified by employees and their supervisors.

Closely linked is the importance of self-efficacy that formed the basis of the process of empowering others. In the investigation, these traits should be viewed against the background of not only the local context, but equally importantly, the impact and role of ubuntu in perceptions and experiences of respondents. As mentioned earlier, the importance of contribution to the community was evident, but on a higher level, it is viewed as a more practical contribution by attempting to empower others. In order for participants to be able to contribute in such a manner, it is first and foremost necessary for them to develop a sense of personal control (Fourie & Van Eeden, 2010). Against the background of ubuntu it is clear the respondents value the importance of supportiveness and sharing of skills and attributes (Mbigi & Maree, 1995).

It is of no surprise that culture fails to be independent from the work environment (Noordin & Jusoff, 2010). The findings suggest that participants valued a process of mutual understanding in the organisation. In order to be accepted on a social or personal level, to communicate effectively and openly and to address the language barrier and need for recognition, efforts should be made by employees at all levels of the organisational hierarchy. It is clear that the process of acculturation is evident in the work experiences of respondents where references were made about the need and attempts to integrate into the social – and often Western – work environment. However, of importance is the suggestion that acculturation should not only be viewed from one side, but that a dual process is suggested where respondents highlighted the need for their white counterparts to attempt to understand and embrace their culture as well. This process could result in a ‘new’ work culture in South African organisations.

In all these findings it is suggested that the manifestation of dimensions of job satisfaction with black respondents are more complex and multi-faceted than attempting to identify specific and clear-cut variables associated with job satisfaction. The acknowledgement of the cultural and socio-political context of research in this area is undeniably important in order to progress in the understanding of dimensions associated with job satisfaction.

#### 6.2.2.2 The identification of qualitative differences between male and female black middle level managers

Within the literature it was clear that the assumption is made that males and females at higher levels in organisations will have similar expectations of their job outcomes (Chiu, 1998). However, from the findings of this investigation, it was clear that gender differences do exist at middle management level.

With reference to social needs, the findings suggest that females do value social interaction in their jobs more than males. Mason (1995) argues that females experience higher levels of job satisfaction if they work in a supportive environment where cooperation is prevalent. This coincides with the findings where females did suggest the importance of interpersonal relationships, not only with work colleagues, but also the relationship with their supervisor. Jeanquart-Barone and Sekaran (1994) also suggested that female employees placed more trust in male supervisors than in female supervisors. Since all superiors in the investigation were males and played a prominent role in the female job experience, it questions the Leader Membership Exchange Model (Wayne, Liden & Sparrow, 1994) where it is assumed that employees that have a same-sex supervisor will have a higher quality exchange relationship than those with a supervisor from the opposite sex. It is suggested that the possible influence of ubuntu where male elders are viewed as leaders who deserve respect from others, could explain these research findings (Mbigi, 1995). From a managerial perspective, no evidence in the findings was found to suggest that female managers experienced difficulty in managing male subordinates, as suggested by Statt (2004). Open communication and the restrictions placed on interpersonal relationships, understanding and communication were also highlighted by female respondents. Their need for social support and interaction is in line with Eagly (1987) who suggests that females, more than males, are attracted to communal values and satisfaction with co-workers (Tang & Talpade, 1999).

With reference to autonomy within the work environment, clear gender differences were found. Males made special reference to autonomy experienced in the workplace but not with reference to the task at hand. Females, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of being able to be away from work during certain times of the week. This is supported by work done by Bowen, Cattell and Distiller (2008) who suggested the existence of gender differences with reference to being away from work during normal working hours. Martin (1993) explains this by suggesting the females are reluctant to commit to long working hours and more travel due to priorities towards families. However, this investigation found an absence of reference to any form of role conflict or work-family conflict from both male and

female participants. This can possibly be explained by means of Super's (1990) lifespan theory which argues that individuals do adopt various roles with different emotional outlets for them. The findings are in line with Grandey et al. (2005) who question the link between job satisfaction and work-family conflict. In larger organisations child support by means of crèche facilities or possible flexi time could potentially lessen the impact of work-family-conflict or role demands. Similarly it will be of interest to investigate whether such formal role conflicts and demands still exist in a South African environment which is slowly integrating different values, beliefs and cultures.

No gender differences were found with regards to recognition of qualifications in the workplace. Both males and females had strong viewpoints regarding the appropriateness of affirmative action according to ability and suitability of applicants in the workplace. Since all respondents obtained tertiary qualifications, it is recommended to organisations to closely monitor and investigate perceptions regarding skills and qualifications of affirmative action appointees and to address potential issues with appropriate staff training sessions or focus groups.

In the findings, gender differences were found regarding self-actualisation and self-efficacy. Mostly males commented on the need and importance of self-actualisation which is in contrast to the work of Johnson, McClure and Schneider (1999) who indicated the importance of intellectually stimulating work for both sexes. However, Mason (1997) did mention that males value work which is more inclined towards self-actualisation whilst females value the more social supportive interaction. This is in line with the current findings where females regarded social support and their social needs as important. These findings therefore also support the socialisation theory where it is argued that males and females were brought up in environments where specific roles were attributed to them.

With reference to the importance of self-efficacy, it was found that females placed more importance on this variable with particular emphasis on the need to empower others due to their specific skills and abilities.

It can be suggested that black females in particular struggled in the past to integrate different worlds (i.e. cultural world and world of work) (Bell, 1990). Due to the challenges associated with such demands, these females could possibly experience a need to assist and help those in situations not necessarily identical to theirs, but to create opportunities and encourage self-efficacy traits in others in order to deal with personal and work challenges. It is recommended that organisations pay closer attention to the impact of biculturalism and

the process of acculturation and that organisational support could be provided in terms of the empowerment of employees – not necessarily in a work-related context, but also in other personal and cultural matters. It is also of importance for organisations to pay close attention to the development of strong work ties between employees which could enhance the development of strong networks of support, communication and teamwork (Auster, 2001). Within such an environment of trust and co-operation, diverse knowledge and skills of employees could be utilised and shared which could create opportunities to guide and empower others in an often informal manner.

#### 6.2.2.3 Conclusion

In terms of the aims of the investigation, it was found that no ‘new’ dimensions of job satisfaction were identified, but rather existing dimensions which manifest in a unique way in the South African context against the background and impact of acculturation which is highlighted as a two-way process between individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Apart from the need for recognition, all master themes bore evidence of gender differences. Where appropriate, recommendations were made for organisations to consider.

### 6.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

An advantage of the qualitative research methodology remains the creation of opportunities for participants to share their personal experiences and perceptions with the researcher without the constraints of closed questions or references to a predetermined theoretical framework or model. Due to the acknowledgement of the complex relationship between lived experiences against the socio-political background, it appeared an appropriate choice to use IPA to contribute to the double hermeneutic process.

During the investigation, data was gathered through a single semi-structured interview. Due to the nature of qualitative research, it could be suggested that multiple interviews could have been considered (Foster, 2009). A possible reason for this is to build up a trust relationship between the researcher and the participant and to establish multiple opportunities to develop opportunity for discussion. Multiple interviews could also have contributed to the depth and richness of data obtained through the discussions. In addition, focus groups could have been considered in order to explore specific themes more in depth and detail. It would have given the opportunity to participants to communicate within a small trusted circle which possibly could have triggered some other deeper-rooted topics. This

could possibly also have addressed the language issue since other native speaking participants could have helped each other find the correct words in order to express themselves.

A potential limitation of the investigation could be the use of telephonic interviews. Although viewed as convenient to both researcher and respondents, the setting and immediate environment of the respondents could have had an impact on their conversation and responses. Since the researcher had no control of the presence of other individuals during interviews, respondents could have been constrained due to the personal nature of the questions asked.

Potential bias could have taken place with the snowballing sampling method. Since participants recommended each other to take part in the investigation, possible discussions about interviews and questions could have been shared between participants that consequently could have resulted in social desirability. This is especially true if participants knew each other closely on a professional or personal level.

Findings of this investigation cannot be generalised to larger samples due to the homogeneous nature of the sample. Although a requirement of IPA remains to select as homogeneous sample as possible, it is acknowledged that data derived from such interviews could differ from different employment sectors. Results could be influenced by the common nature of the educational work environment, rather than the individual experiences unique to each participant.

A weakness of IPA remains the reliance on the ability of respondents to be able to verbalise what they have experienced and what they are thinking. This is particularly of essence when conducting interviews in the second or often third language of respondents. Limitations are placed on the participants to verbalise and express themselves effectively that would inevitably have an impact on the richness of data derived from the interviews (Willig, 2001). Ironically this limitation manifested in the dimensions of job satisfaction and the frustration of not being able to communicate effectively with co-workers. The language barrier is, in a sense, highlighted by the methodological challenges experienced in this investigation and supports the importance of the role of language in open communication.



#### **6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LITERATURE REVIEWS AND IPA STUDIES**

It is proposed that further research in the following areas is considered:

- Further IPA studies can build on the findings of the investigation with emphasis placed on employees in other industries than education in South Africa.
- It will be of value to explore gender differences more extensively with emphasis placed on the ever changing role of females in the workplace. Due to the lack of evidence in the study to suggest any form of role conflict or work-family-conflict, further studies can include respondents with demographic requirements such as being in a long-term relationship and having responsibilities for a family.
- More research into the theoretical issues plaguing the field of job satisfaction and gender differences within the workplace.
- From a managerial perspective, no females commented on the potential challenges and expectations placed upon their managerial styles in managing males, as suggested in the literature. It is therefore proposed to conduct investigations into perceptions of male employees working closely with female managers with the recognition of the impact of acculturation in the workplace.
- Qualitative studies into the possible development of a 'new' culture in South African organisations as a result of collectivist and individualistic cultures merging as a result of the demands placed on them as employees of South African organisations. These studies could be further extended to acculturation outside the work environment.
- More extensive studies into the impact of language barriers and the lack of effective 'open' communication experienced by black employees as prerequisite of social acceptance and social integration in their work environment.
- An investigation into the perceptions of black employees of different demographical backgrounds and educational levels regarding the organisational recognition and acceptance of their qualifications brought to the workplace. A longitudinal study into the change of perceptions regarding affirmative action could shed light on these perceptions.

## **6.5 FINAL CONCLUSION**

From a methodological perspective, the investigation contributed to research into job satisfaction in various ways:

The investigation is the first qualitative investigation focusing only on black middle level managers in the South African context which can contribute to a deeper understanding of well-known dimensions of job satisfaction as highlighted and discussed in the literature.

The study provides a detailed insight into gender differences experienced in the workplace against the background and complexities of socio-political and historical variables. It also adds to the large amount of existing research focusing on the different dimensions of job satisfaction as well as models and frameworks associated with content and process theories of experiences of job satisfaction.

From a cultural perspective, it is important to note that acculturation should be viewed as a reciprocal process where both black and white employees are actively involved in an attempt whereby mutual understanding, respect and trust are nurtured in order to contribute to an inclusive, motivated workforce. Such a 'new' work culture places emphasis on the awareness of individual differences due to personal and political history, socio-economic variables and cultural expectations, but builds on the recognition of the importance of an integrated workforce where the common good of the individual and the organisation are prioritised on a daily basis.

### **Summary**

The chapter focused on the main empirical questions. A brief overview of the choice of an appropriate research methodology was followed with the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the investigation. Contributions of the study towards psychological and organisational knowledge were discussed and it was followed by a more extensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen research methodology. Suggestions for future literature reviews and IPA studies conclude the chapter.

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