Chapter - 2

Review of Literature

This chapter is exclusively for ‘Review of Literature’. It discusses the various findings available from the existing researches on the influence of different independent variables on the dependent variable ‘career advancement of managers in general as well as of MBAs’.

2.1. Introduction

A management degree does make a difference to a career. The structured programme, the faculty and student interactions, and the very atmosphere that a good B-school generates, all combine to provide the right mix of talents required on the global stage, says Govil(2003).

The MBA degree is viewed by many as a valuable investment, and the increase in the number of MBA programmes is indicative of the perceived benefits of that degree. Many men and women see the MBA to be a passport to success in terms of increased pay and enhanced career growth(Business Week,1997).

Baruch and Peiperl(2000) suggest that many see this qualification as a prerequisite for many senior management positions. The most popular reason for taking the MBA is to improve job opportunities(Simpson et al.,2005). One strategy men and women adopt to move into the higher levels of management is to equip themselves with an MBA(Burke,1994; Goffee and Nicholson,1994; Simpson and Altman,2000). Boyatzis and Renio(1989) suggest that doing an MBA programme add value on a number of abilities related to effective managerial performance. However, according to Shipper(1999), the MBA programme does not provide an advantage in key managerial or leadership skills over those who possess only a bachelor's or some other master's degree.

According to Collin(1996) the initial motivation for undertaking an MBA varied, of course, between the individuals involved and included concern for career prospects, for a move into management, promotion, or improved job performance; the desire for
stimulus, challenge and job satisfaction and, the wish to ‘break the mould’ set early in life by low school expectations and social class.

Both the motives of men and women in embarking on an MBA seemed remarkably similar. The reason cited most frequently by both men and women is ‘to improve job opportunities’. Similarly, the second most popular motive for men and women is ‘to obtain a business qualification’. Together, these two reasons account for a majority of both men and women (Heaton et al., 2000). In terms of career benefits, popular choices are greater marketability, enhanced job prospects, enhanced salary or status, and enhanced credibility and confidence. In terms of skills, the two most popular choices are the ability to handle and analyse complex data and negotiation skills (Simpson et al., 2005).

Almost all of the interviewees believed that they had progressed in their careers after completing their MBAs and that they had benefited from acquiring a set of hard skills, particularly financial and data analysis skills. However, intrinsic benefits, such as increased confidence and credibility, emerged as highly important for the majority of the research participants. The most crucial benefit of the MBA, acknowledged by all interviewees, was an increase in self-confidence (Simpson et al., 2005). Several reported that the acquisition of the MBA had given them better business confidence and self-confidence (Heaton et al., 2000).

The majority of the interviewees reported improved team-working skills as a result of doing the MBA. This was acknowledged to be a consequence of the emphasis on group work in the course, an experience that was sometimes painful and difficult (as individual groups did not always work well) but was in general beneficial (Simpson et al., 2005).

Collin (1996) reports that MBAs have a sense of increased enthusiasm and a greater ability and readiness to challenge others. Most of them learned a great deal in terms of knowledge, understanding and the ability to use a broader conceptual framework as the basis for questioning individual perceptions and organisational patterns. However, Mant (1979) says that MBAs rarely apply anything of substantive usefulness but they almost invariably return more confident from the experience. What that confidence is difficult to
determine, but its importance ought not to be underestimated. Also he acknowledges that MBA degree increased their social status.

The transformation achieved through the MBA degree may lead on to further transformation. Both male and female MBAs have almost similar level of feeling about what extent their MBA helped their career (Heaton et al., 2000). They conclude that a majority of woman MBAs’ careers had been boosted by their MBA qualification and that this was backed up by the objective facts of promotion.

The traditional career (where salary, status, and a secure career ladder within a single organisation are exchanged for loyalty and commitment) may be giving way to new responsibility for their own career management in a more uncertain environment (Hall and Mirvis, 1996), where career paths go beyond the boundaries of a single organisation (Hall, 1996) and where there is an emphasis on portable skills and on meaningful work (Hall and Mirvis, 1996).

According to Simpson et al. (2005), from the new boundaryless career perspective, the MBA may have a pivotal role for men and women in facilitating career development and as a means of acquiring a range of portable skills that are essential in the new boundaryless career environment. As it has seen, career development for men and women may differ post-MBA, and there may be differences in the range of skills men and women bring to the workplace, including skills acquired from the MBA.

In a study by Simpson et al. (2005), the majority of both men and women had a bachelor’s degree as their highest qualification prior to the MBA, with the largest concentrations in business/management (41.3%), followed by science/engineering (34.6%) and arts/humanities (24%). Male respondents were much more likely than females to have studied engineering, for example, while female respondents were much more likely than males to have studied arts or humanities. Clearly these differences in primary degree subjects may themselves be influential in terms of the sectors and functions in which respondents are employed and in terms of career progression (Heaton et al., 2000).
Most management graduates from premier Indian management institutes are engineers. Still they don’t prefer manufacturing sector. Possibly because of less career progression opportunities in manufacturing sector. Management graduates say that the pay is comparatively low in manufacturing firms and career growth is slower than in other sectors(Krishnan,2005).

Statistics indicate that in 2004, 28 per cent of all IIM students preferred to be in the BFSI (Banking, Finance, Securities and Insurance) sector, while 29 per cent preferred jobs with IT companies. Another 11 per cent took up consulting assignments, while the others preferred to work in marketing functions. An approximately 70 per cent of all IIM graduates in 2004 were engineers(Krishnan,2005). A study by Kotter(1995) of Harvard Business School(HBS) showed that MBA students were taught how to market products like Procter & Gamble and not how to build products like Ford. He further says that the placement process and the on-campus lecture series had more non-manufacturing representatives than the curriculum. Fewer MBAs began their jobs in manufacturing. Only around 20% MBAs are in manufacturing. The biggest single concentration is in finance--commercial banking, investment banking, investment management, and trading-accounting for about 31%. Another 10% are in consulting and 7% are in real estate. About 5% are in distribution. The trend away from manufacturing is interrelated with the trends to small business and entrepreneurial situations(Kotter,1995).

For both men and women MBAs, the finance and accounting modules were regarded as the most beneficial, with marketing ranked second. The next most useful subjects were human resource management and organisation studies(Heaton et al.,2000). Support areas such as administration and training, the functions from which progression into senior management is notoriously difficult(Heaton et al.,2000).

MBAs are employed mainly in general management, marketing, corporate strategy and IT. In a study about MBAs by Simpson et al (2005), the largest concentrations worked in finance(32.8%), consultancy(16.4%), computing(11.4%), and manufacturing(12.4%).

Women make up an increasing proportion of the full-time workforce and of managers around the world(Wirth,2001). Yet, they are still under-represented in management in
most countries and in senior management everywhere (Davidson and Burke, 2004; Wirth, 2001). One potential vehicle for women to secure more senior management positions may be the pursuit of management education, through a master of business administration degree or MBA. “Partnerships among business schools and businesses are critical to attracting more women to the MBA” said Carol Hollenshead (2000), Director, Center for the Education of women at the University of Michigan. According to her, “the key strategies include aggressively recruiting women to business schools, providing additional financial aid, developing more inclusive business and business school culture, and addressing work/life balance issues” She further says that an important strategy may be the need to increase the number of female professors and women involved in recruitment. Fewer women are entering MBA programmes, thus reducing the pipeline for career advancement, despite the efforts of MBA schools to attract more women students. Coe (1992); Rycroft (1989) have found that women tend to be concentrated into a narrow range of support functions such as administration, personnel management and education.

The benefits of the MBA programme to the graduates, in terms of relevance, knowledge gained, behaviour changed and outcomes achieved were to be substantial. The MBA is seen as a significant factor in career change and development (Ainsworth and Morley, 1995).

Govil (2003) says that B-school graduates will rarely admit to any changes in persona, but somehow, we notice the polish and the different way of thinking in them. B-school atmosphere which generates a hunger to do things differently and better than the guy next door.

Career advancement is of prime concern not only to individuals but also to organisations, as employees' personal success can eventually contribute to organisational success (Judge et al., 1999). Researchers continue to try to identify individual and organisational factors that facilitate employees' career advancement (Judge and Bretz, 1994). Past researches have identified two broad categories of variables that influence managerial career progress: demographic and organisational variables (Rhodes and Doering, 1993).
Super (1990) noted that career development emerges from a dynamic interaction between individual factors and socio-economic and other environmental factors such as school, family, geography, and the labour market. More specifically, he has proposed that socio-economic-environmental factors may condition career development in at least two ways: by opening or closing opportunities and by shaping occupational concepts and self-concepts.

According to Ng et al. (2005) both the contest-mobility perspective and the sponsored-mobility perspective appear useful for predicting employees' career advancement. They found that human capital, organisational sponsorship, socio-demographic status, and stable individual differences were related to various measures of career advancement. These two models together suggest that career advancement is largely a function of two important career experiences: working hard and receiving sponsorship. Human capital and socio-demographics are more strongly related to objective career advancement (Salary, faster promotions, etc.), whereas organisational sponsorship and stable individual differences are more strongly related to subjective career advancement (career satisfaction, intangible benefits, etc.). Judge et al. (2004) say that the link between intrinsic career success (satisfaction with one's career) and extrinsic career success (pay, promotions, job level) has been demonstrated in numerous studies.

Career advancement barriers explain the continuing ability-attainment gap in the occupational choices of people (Mcwhirter, 1997).

Cognitions and emotions influence the appraisal of career barriers and coping strategies. While a career barrier has objectively defined characteristics (e.g., a desired promotion was denied), the meaning an individual attaches to the barrier determines how the individual reacts to it (Perrez and Reicherts, 1992). The appraisal of a career barrier involves subjective, intuitive assessments of the discrepancy between the way things are and they way things should be (London, 1997). Individuals in a positive mood tend to see things in a positive light and be optimistic about the future (George and Brief, 1995). Mood affects how favourably we view the value of possible behaviors and outcomes and our optimism about the chances of achieving them. In addition, mood affects attributions.
People in a negative mood make more internal and stable attributions for failures than for successes, while people in a positive mood make more internal and stable attributions for successes than for failures (Forgas et al., 1990). Moreover, people in positive moods make more internal attributions for successes than failures both for themselves and others, while people in negative moods make more internal attributions for their own failures but not for the failures of others (Forgas et al., 1990).

More men MBAs than women MBAs experienced 'no barriers' to their careers (Heaton et al., 2000). The greatest single barrier experienced by female respondents was 'the men's club network' i.e. "the biggest stumbling block in women's career progression is still prejudice from men" (Heaton et al., 2000).

Conflict with work and family responsibilities, differences in salaries paid to male and female managers, and desire to spend more time with family were the most common barriers to career advancement of women (Campbell, 1999).

Facilitators to career advancement included accepting an increase in job responsibilities or taking on new assignments, moving to a different department or service, and changing jobs that required learning new skills. Positive correlations were found between the number of career facilitators and social support. Negative correlations were obtained between the number of barriers to career advancement. Positive significant correlations were found among the number of barriers and gender discrimination and social conflicts. Positive correlations were found between the number of career facilitators and social support (Campbell, 1999).

According to Desai (1996), Indian women tend to impose restrictions on their career aspirations or personal achievements for family reasons. She argues that keeping a low profile in one's career enables these women to be in both the worlds of work and family.

2.2. Personal variables and career advancement

Researchers have studied the influence of parents and the family on children's career choice and development. Much of this research has demonstrated links between career development and such factors as socio-economic status, parents' educational,
occupational attainment, etc. The relationship between career development and these factors demonstrates the experiences of security that promote exploration and risk taking (Ketterson and Blustein, 1997).

While women (86 percent) say they are satisfied with their careers overall, nearly 30 percent report greater difficulty with career advancement and less access to options that facilitate advancement, such as mentoring, sponsorship from senior management, and working in line positions. More men (42 percent) than women (33 percent) indicate finding mentors have been easy at their current job. Forty-six percent of all men MBA graduates hold line jobs, while only 37 percent of women MBA graduates do (Hollenshead, 2000).

Women have found it difficult to make progress into the most senior positions in private and public sector management, the legal profession, teaching, medicine and other professions, while boardrooms are still seen as a male preserve (Heaton et al., 2000). Before the commencement of MBA studies, the most striking differences between men and women, in terms of management function, are in the areas of general management and administration (Heaton et al., 2000).

Careers of male and female managers differ, even after an MBA (Heaton et al., 2000). Women earn lower salaries (Ng et al., 2005). Men and women’s career experiences are often different (Stroh et al., 1992). Although the proportion of women in management has been increasing, advancement to top management has been minimal (Powell, 1999).

Heaton et al. (2000) established that the similarities in management positions did not translate into equality in earnings for the male and female MBA graduates. Women MBAs were still found to be more likely than men to appear in the lowest pay band. In addition, more women in mid-career are leaving their corporate jobs, opting for a career in small business or full-time investment in family (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005).

Men may be regarded as a more valuable human resource than women are, because of stereotypes. Men’s salary was often larger than those associated with promotion. This indicates that although organisations promote women and racial minorities almost as
often as they promote men and whites, women and racial minorities earn lower salaries. A possible explanation is the pacification hypothesis (Flanders and Anderson, 1973), which suggests that some organisations promote women and ethnic minorities to convey the image that they are concerned about equal opportunity. However, in reality, such promotions are often not accompanied by greater salary. Heaton et al. (2000) say that the differences, which are evident, may perhaps is partly explained by the different employment sectors occupied by men and women. Further explanation may lie in the differences in management function. For example, it was noted that women MBAs were more likely than men to work in ‘administration’. But still it can be speculated that some form of ‘glass ceiling’ does exist even for employees with similar qualifications.

Many women believe that family responsibilities are a barrier to their advancement (Liff and Ward, 2001; Metz and Tharenou, 2001), partly because they affect their colleagues’ and superiors’ perceptions of them (Griffith and MacBride-King, 1998; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989; Swiss and Walker, 1993). These perceptions and stereotypes of women with children can lead to discriminatory behaviour, thus creating an additional obstacle to advancement for mothers. Children and marriage affect people's perception of women's commitment to work (Metz, 2005). In reality, women (with MBA degrees) do not differ substantially in their commitment to work (Korabik and Rosin, 1995). This is confirmed in Indian context also. Indian Husband and wife have equal job involvement, say Anupama and Gopa (2005). This actually shakes the general prevalent feeling that married women are too busy with their home life. So, this may lead to a conclusion that job involvement may not be gender specific.

Women who try to balance family and career do not appear to be penalised in terms of managerial level (Konrad and Cannings, 1994), advancement (Tharenou, 1999), or salary (Schneer and Reitman, 1993). There is a similar process of advancement in management for mothers and non-mothers (Metz, 2005). The IT Taskforce Survey reported that both men and women in the software sector have shared equal qualification and experience and there seems to be equality of opportunities for women in the IT labour market (Suriya, 1998). Most of the companies believe that women are intellectually on par
with men and they are sincere and loyal. This shows that the emerging jobs and industries may be more suitable for women career advancement at par with men.

Mentor support and career encouragement can help women overcome obstacles to their advancement (Ragins, 1999), and internal networks can assist women obtain information necessary to perform their jobs and advance (Liff and Ward, 2001; Mallon and Cassell, 1999). Legislation and family-friendly policies in organisations are insufficient to make women with children feel that family responsibilities and work discontinuity do not negatively affect their career success (Metz, 2005). Personal support was a more powerful predictor for women’s subjective career success (Nabi, 2001).

Schneer and Reitman (2003) found in a study of MBA graduates that women managers on protean career paths may be more likely than women with more traditional organisational careers to achieve equality with male counterparts. It suggests that protean careers may help facilitate women’s career progress (Simpson et al., 2005). Protean career means frequent change of job across different industries for faster career growth.

Metz and Tharenou (2001) say that social capital is more important to women’s advancement to high managerial levels than to low managerial levels. Through social capital, women can gain direct access to economic resources. They can increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts or individuals of refinement or, alternatively, they can affiliate with institutions that confer valued credentials. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not herself, who are the actual source of her advantage (Portes, 1998).

Superior educational institutions and mentoring facilitate superior performance of students so that the market’s decision to provide superior outcomes for those from better educational institutions is based on a rational, accurate valuation of their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Judge et al., 2004).

Additional education and additional career experience identified as the key factors for success in the industry (Kiehn and Wright, 2004). The importance of educational level as a predictor of career progress has increased significantly (Bjoørkman and Lu, 1999).
Bozionelos (2004) says that general mental ability leads to eventual extrinsic career success. Knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics developed through superior education results in higher wages (Becker, 1964).

Research has found that the level of education and quality of education had positive association with career success (Judge et al., 1995). High-quality education is a determinant of advancement in the early career years (Callanan, 2003). Success at work and success at school are closely linked and inter-dependent (Rhoder and French, 1999). Measures of intelligence have been shown to be important in shaping careers. Some occupations appear to demand more intellectual capacity than others, both in the work itself and in the schooling required to obtain that work. Ability, as indicated by intelligence tests, however, does not account for attainments (Long and Fox, 1995). Differences in measured ability do not predict subsequent levels of performance (Bayer and Folger, 1966; Cole and Cole, 1973). In the case of MBAs also there is virtually no relationship between measures of intelligence and their career success (Kotter, 1995).

Grade point average (GPA) of MBA degree was not related to career outcomes (Konard et al., 2005). Cooper and Sawaf (1997) and Goleman (1995) suggest that emotional intelligence is a crucial determinant of job and career success and may even be more important than general mental ability for determining career success. It may be due to the reason that people who are emotionally intelligent are able to recognise and use their own and others' emotional states to regulate behaviour and deal with the environment (Huy, 1999).

Bowles and Gintis (1976) were among the first to argue that non-cognitive traits and behaviors are more important than cognitive skills in determining employment outcomes. Jensen (1973) argued that differential employment and earnings achievement are due to differential intelligence and that such intelligence is largely inherited and unchangeable. Family functioning (parenting style and family members' interaction styles) [Altman, 1997] has a greater influence on career development than either family structure (size, birth order, number of parents, etc.) or parents' educational and occupational status (Fisher and Griggs, 1994; Trusty et al., 1997). Parents are the single
most influential factor in the career development (Kotrlik and Harrison, 1989; McNair and Brown, 1983; O'Neil et al., 1980; Orfield and Paul, 1994; Trusty, 1996), but are not adequately informed about how to help (Jeffery et al., 1992; Young, 1994). It is confirmed from the study of Israel et al., (2001) who say that we have to enhance parents' capacity to help their children make decisions about education and career aspirations. Young and Friesen (1992) reported that parents participate in a number of activities that influence their children's career development, including acquiring educational and marketable skills, developing specific values or beliefs, and fostering independent thinking and action. Parents' expectations and support are important factors in influencing career choice (Guerra and Braungart-Rieker, 1999; Kenny, 1990) and future educational and occupational attainment (Poole et al., 1991). Otto (2000) found that parental influence is there on children's career development.

Parental socio-economic class is a powerful force in shaping lives. Many studies have shown this to be true. There may be a correlation between parent's occupation and son's/daughter's occupation. Lau and Shaffer (1999) found correlation between family background and career success. Blau and Duncan (1967) report that there is a positive correlation between father's occupation and son's occupation. Socio-economic status play in career opportunities and successes (O'Brien et al., 1999). The higher the social status, the more one tends to find non-working mothers, fathers who were oriented to work and career, fathers who were admired and were seen as role models, higher economic expectations on the part of children, and more children attending a high-status college. However, Kotter (1995) says that statistics do not show that parental socio-economic factor is a major determining force in the income of MBAs. He says virtually no relationship between background affluence and income of MBAs. Hout (1984) found that socio-economic status played an increasingly important role in the occupational mobility of Black men in U.S.A. This shows that socio-economic status may influence the career advancement depending on the ethnic status.

The locational origins of employees reveal the absence of 'rural brains' in the industry. Survey reports indicated that the IT industry is urban based and it favours socially and economically favoured groups. The 'ruralities' have the least access to this up-coming
industry. Moreover, the English-speaking criterion applicable across the range of activities is an immediate disadvantage for rural aspirant. This exclusiveness becomes even more evident in the case of women professionals wherein a majority of them belong to metropolitan cities and none came from the rural districts (Suriya, 2003).

From the above literature on parents' socio-economic status, it can be concluded that the parents' backgrounds are often the primary source of children's work values, attitudes, behaviours (Grotevant and Cooper, 1988; DeRidder, 1990; Penick and Jepsen, 1992; O'Neil et al., 1980), self-concept, cultural norms, beliefs, and goals; all of which affect their career development and decisions (Schulenberg et al., 1984; Birk and Blimline, 1984).

Parent expectations and support are important factors in influencing career decidedness and maturity (Guerra & Braungart-Rieker, 1999; Kenny, 1990) and future educational and occupational attainment (Poole et al., 1991). Young and Friesen (1992) reported that parents participate in a number of activities that influence their children's career development, including acquiring educational and marketable skills, developing specific values or beliefs, and fostering independent thinking and action. Scientists also agree that parents are the single most influential factor in the career development and choice of their children (Kotrlik and Harrison, 1989; McNair and Brown, 1983; O'Neil et al., 1980; Orfield and Paul, 1994; Trusty, 1996), but are not adequately informed about how to help (Jeffery et al., 1992; Young, 1994). Scientists also agree that parents are the single most influential factor in the career development and choice of their children (Kotrlik and Harrison, 1989; McNair and Brown, 1983; O'Neil et al., 1980; Orfield and Paul, 1994; Trusty, 1996), but are not adequately informed about how to help (Jeffery, Lehr, Young, 1994).

Spousal support theory (Kanter, 1977) suggests that spouses provide additional supports for job performance. Wives not only take care of household responsibilities, but provide counsel and work assistance for the husband's job. Women are not likely to benefit as much from spousal support as men as they are unlikely to have a stay-at-home husband and are more likely to be single than men. Distributive justice theory suggests that those with the greatest needs will receive the most rewards. Married with dependent children
and spouse (not employed) would be looking for the highest earnings through faster career advancement. Hill (1979) found support for the distributive justice theory.

Schneer and Reitman (2002) say that despite the prevalence of the post-traditional family structure, along with the implementation of family friendly policies to make working life better for those in dual earner families, traditional family men still reap the greatest rewards.

Career satisfaction has frequently served as a criterion variable in research on career dynamics (Bozionelos, 1996; Burke, 2001; Richardsen et al., 1997; Seibert et al., 1999; Sturm, 2001). Career satisfaction has been studied as an important outcome of an individual’s career as whole (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988, 1989). However, career satisfaction can also be viewed as an antecedent or component of an individual’s overall quality of life, or life satisfaction.

When satisfaction with one’s career as whole is considered it has been found to be positively related to life satisfaction (Beutell and Wittig-Berman, 1999; Wiener, Muczyk, and Martin, 1992). All of the personality measures except tough-mindedness were significantly related to career satisfaction and life satisfaction (Lounsbury et al, 2004). They also found a positive relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Employees now-a-days seem to value the quality of life more than the amount of salary they get (Vloeberghs, 2002). A number of organisations have implemented family-responsive HR policies and practices (Glass and Estes, 1997; Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000).

Weekend work is generally shown to be negatively related to quality of family life (Voydanoff, 1989). The compressed work week schedule is positively related to family satisfaction (Tippins and Stroh, 1991). The ‘spillover theory’ suggests that work-related activities/satisfaction can affect non-work life and non-work responsibilities/satisfaction may also affect one’s work life. For example, a person’s marital satisfaction may affect his/her relationship to the work place (Brett et al., 1992).

Not all researchers accept the spillover theory. Some researchers argue in favour of a compensation theory. This theory suggests that there is an inverse relationship between
non-work and work such that individuals compensate for shortcomings in one domain by satisfying needs in the other. For example, a person who is dissatisfied with their family or non-work life may seek greater levels of satisfaction from their work life environment (Zedeck, 1992).

A third model explaining the relationship between non-work and work is the segmentation theory based on the premise that non-work and work lives are distinct and one domain has no influence on the other. For example, family life satisfies needs for affection, intimacy, and relationships, while work life satisfies needs for competition and instrumental relationships (Zedeck, 1992).

Life satisfaction represents an overarching criterion or ultimate outcome of human experience (Andrews, 1974). Recent studies have shown that people want to have more control over their work and accord more meaning to their non-work life (Buddhapriya, 2005).

2.3. Professional variables and career advancement

Successful managers have been found to possess higher levels of need for power, of optimism and of emotional stability than unsuccessful managers (Kotter, 1982). Hall (1976) found that successful managers had significantly higher levels of motivation that appeared to stem from high self-actualisation needs.

Podolny and Baron (1997) found that individuals with network ties to an organisation's decision-makers had faster promotion rates, but those with networks involving low-status individuals had slower career advancement. Research studies suggest that, in many cases, influential sponsors can facilitate career rewards (Cable and Murray, 1999; Reskin, 1979). Nabi (2000) says career-enhancing strategies are instrumental in the career self-management process. Personal characteristics such as ambition, aggressiveness, entrepreneurship, effective self-presentation and self-promotion, and guile are likely to lead to economic success (Farkas, 2003).

Employers' chief tool to motivate their employees to the full effort is the incentive structure they put in place within the firm. Accordingly, they seek to hire and reward
those employees who have ‘incentive enhancing preferences’, that is, employees whose personal traits predispose them to respond positively to these incentives. These traits include a long time horizon (a future orientation), enjoyment of work, a strong desire to earn money, personal identification with the firm’s goals, and a tendency to tell the truth (Farkas, 2003). People with a proactive personality are relatively unconstrained by situational forces, effect environmental change, identify opportunities and act on them, show initiative, take action, and persevere until meaningful change occurs (Crant, 2000).

In any strategic plan, the value of a network of professional colleagues cannot be overlooked. It is important to have visibility with people outside the current institutions. Engaging in networking behaviours by attempting to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to provide work or career assistance, is considered to be an important career management strategy (Forret and Dougherty, 2004). Recruiters and placement professionals agree that developing a professional contact network should be part of any strategic career plan (Craig, 1998). There are two reasons to expect access to information and access to resources to be related to objective career success. First, greater access to information and resources may enhance individual work performance. Information and resources have been noted as contextual factors that empower employees, leading to higher levels of motivation and performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Spreitzer, 1996). Burt (1992, 1997) argues that individuals able to use their network position to fill a broker or boundary spanner role within the organisation add greater value to the organisation. In fact, centrality in the advice network has been linked to job performance (Sparrowe et al., 1997). Information from people other than one's immediate supervisor seems to be the key to advancement, because it may help one to understand the culture and political situation, as well as providing exposure to a breadth of technical issues and keeping one up to date with what's going on in the organisation.

The self-management strategies appeared to be useful in the absence of certain types of mentor support (Murphy and Ensher, 2001). Hirsch (1987) predicted that successful managers would systematically manage their own careers. Individuals who used self-set career goals reported greater job satisfaction and perceived career success. Kilduff and Day (1994) say that individuals who are relatively higher in self-monitoring capability
show greater success in terms of promotions. Mentoring and self-management strategies each contributed uniquely to satisfaction and perceived career satisfaction (Murphy and Ensher, 2001). Kotter (1995) says that MBAs have high standards, a strong desire to win, and a willingness to grow. Naidoo (2004) found that the most important factor contributing to job success is 'individual effort'. Volunteering the skills for any assignments might lead to the position one wishes (Craig, 1998). Taking more personal responsibility for developing career seems to be a common theme among current professionals (Craig, 1998).

2.4 Organisational variables and career advancement

Past research has examined the influence of organisational characteristics on career success. These characteristics include human resource staffing and development strategies, type of industry within which the company operates, size of the organisation, length of the promotional ladder, and many others (Judge et al., 1995; Seibert et al., 1999). Organisational context can affect career success (Judge et al., 1995; Melamed, 1995). Callanan (2003) found that macro organisational factors have influence on career success. According to Firkola (1996), in managerial career-making processes, individual managers and the corporation should be partners. Employees prefer organisational interventions that influence their career development (Kim, 2005). Sheridan et al. (1990) noted that the initial career choice of managers and the relative status of their department play a role in outcomes of their 'career tournament', such as promotion, transfer, and salary progression. Job enrichment and job rotation can also be used to adjust personal career management and strategic organisational planning so as to achieve better alignment between personal career management plans and organisational strategic plans. Management level and performance-based promotion practices were found to have positive effects on the perceived quality of career progress (Chen et al., 2004). Many corporations prefer promoting their staff from within rather than hiring new blood from the open job market (Rosenbaum, 1984). The relatively high search and replacement costs for managers with a high level of human asset specialty make it rational for companies to create internal labour markets, in order to retain such individuals (Osterman, 1984). Companies use all their resources in order to expedite the training process of those
selected through sponsored programme at an early stage, so that it may benefit maximally from efficiently specialised training and socialisation (Wailerdsak and Suehiro, 2004). This will make sponsored candidates fit enough for the higher position without leaving the company. Internal employment practices of organisations do have implications for career success. This is because job ladders create opportunities for movement up the organisational hierarchy and as Agarwal (1981) noted, management levels are closely related to executive compensation and therefore, financial success. Lifetime employment in Japanese corporations enables management to invest heavily in human capital through the in-house training programmes (Ozaki, 1988).

Affiliation with certain types of organisations impacts their career path and what types of organisations enable them to get to the top of organisational hierarchies faster (Hamori, 2004). Organisations on Fortune’s reputation rankings are a favourite target for other employers and the executives affiliated with them are offered larger promotions when they join other organisations. The results suggest that in order to curb the voluntary turnover of executives, these organisations should make a greater investment in the retention of their executive talent (Hamori, 2004). Also he says that organisational reputation positively affects executive career success. He found that executives with international experience earned more promotions. Executives wish to be affiliated with large-sized organisations (Brown et al., 1990; Nystrom and McArthur, 1989), because larger organisations provide more rapid managerial mobility (Nicholson and West, 1988), higher salaries and more training opportunities (Brown et al., 1990) and present more management challenges and complexity. A larger organisation may have greater resources and managerial slack to devote to training (McCartney and Teague, 2001; Osterman, 1995). Also, the larger the corporation is, the greater the number of positions to be filled (Idson, 1989).

Moving employees laterally and helping employees find new challenges in their current jobs are becoming more accepted career development alternatives (Craig, 1998). Executives who are in transition to a general management function gain larger promotions than executives in transition do to other functions (Hamori, 2004).
Organisational restructuring may create a rather hostile environment for the traditional corporate career. Organisational restructuring and global, hyper-competition have revolutionised careers and destroyed the traditional blueprint for advancement and career success (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001). Ball (1997) asserts that flatter, delayered organisations offer fewer opportunities than before for long-term job security and career progression in the conventional sense. He suggests that if flatter organisations are unable to provide career progression to the same degree as previously, new ways have to be found to retain and motivate staff and reward performance in the absence of opportunities to progress up the organisational ladder. Hirsch (1993) says that the ruthless downsizing and discarding of many talented managers will lead to less commitment by managers to their organisations and more commitment to their careers. It will force the managers to rely less on their organisations' internal labor markets and increasingly more on the external labor market to fulfill their career advancement goals. Hall (1986, 1990) said that one should be self-directed and willing to change organisations and jobs to fulfill his or her career desires and needs. Those managers who proactively manage their own careers may advance faster and more adequately fulfilling their career goals, compared to managers who are letting their organisations manage their careers for them (Hall, 1986; Hirsch, 1987).

Functional area may play an important role in a manager's career attainment. Some functional areas are associated with greater centrality in a firm's networks, therefore leading to greater availability of information about the firm. Functional area has often been investigated in terms of line versus staff departments. In many firms the functional areas leading to greatest centrality are the line departments. Research studies have found that gaining line experience early in one's career enhances career success and is necessary to move into upper management levels (Cox and Harquail, 1991; Larwood and Gattiker, 1987; McCauley et al., 1994). Rosenbaum (1984) found that those with line experience had higher rates of promotions than those without line experience.

According to structural discrimination theory, organisational policy and practices discriminate women managers in ways that limit their career mobility (Morrison, 1992). Organisational politics and practices keep out women and limit their advancement in the
organisational hierarchy (Burke and McKeen, 1992). Rosen and Korabik (1991) noted that women often leave organisations because of systemic discrimination embedded in organisational policies, practices, and culture. Stroh et al. (1992) encourage women to use the external labour market—that is, to leave their organisations—to create a greater sense of fairness between themselves and their male counterparts.

Tansky and Cohen (2001) found that organisational commitment and perceived organisational support were significantly correlated with satisfaction with career development. They say that when organisations make efforts to develop their managers, the managers become more committed to the organisation.

Employee perceptions of the organisation's adherence to career-oriented employment practices, including internal mobility, employment security, and training and development, are more strongly related to psychological commitment (Gaertner and Nollen, 1989). Organisations reward individuals who are able to control their emotions and their behaviors in line with a corporate culture that discourages dissent, frowns upon outspokenness, and expects a blind acceptance of senior decisions (Callanan, 2003).

In general, the research results for the influence of organisational characteristics on individual career success have been inconsistent (Greenhaus, 2003). Organisational decisions on who achieves career advancement to middle and senior executive ranks hinge on factors beyond mere competence, taking into account whether the individual is willing to adhere to the demands of the organisational culture and meet the expectations of senior organisational leaders (Jackall, 1983).

MBA students consider the impact of structural conditions as less significant on their career choices than their own human capital and capacity to make free choices (Özbilgin et al., 2005).

In the context of widespread downsizing and reduced opportunities for advancement, an entrepreneurial career has become an increasingly attractive alternative (Parasuraman et al., 1996).
2.5. Environmental variables and career advancement

Universalism dictates that the allocation of rewards and resources should be based solely on the merits of a person's contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Particularism involves the consideration of functionally irrelevant characteristics such as race or sex in the allocation of resources and rewards (Long and Fox, 1995).

The larger social forces of racism and classism form a context within which the career attainment of people must be understood (McWhirter, 1997). Super (1957, 1990) acknowledged the possible influence of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (SES) on the processes of career development. Cox and Nkomo (1991) found that Black MBAs experienced less mentoring than white MBAs. Dreher and Cox (1996) also found that Black MBAs were less likely to form mentoring relationships with white men.

Ethnic minorities perceived greater barriers to finding a job, job performance, and career balance than non-minorities (Smith, 2004). Chow and Crawford (2004) found significant differences in racial and ethnic groups regarding promotions received. Flanders and Anderson (1973) found that some organisations promote women and ethnic minorities to convey the image that they are concerned about equal opportunity. However, in reality, such promotions are often not accompanied by greater salary. Ethnicity plays in career opportunities and successes (O'Brien et al., 1999). White male managers show a higher degree career success than their minority and female counterparts (Judge et al., 1995). Landau (1995) examined the impact of race on promotion potential and found that race was significantly related to having lower promotion potential.

Ethnic identity has been defined as a complex construct that includes a commitment and sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities and traditions of the group (Phinney, 1990). McGoldrick et al. (1982) stated that how one feels about one's ethnic background is often a reflection of how one feels about oneself. A clear predominantly positive ethnic connection can facilitate a sense of freedom, security and comfort, flexibility in behavior, and a capacity for openness with others who are different.
Sex or race differences in outcomes are not necessarily evidence of discrimination (Zuckerman, 1970), nor are similarities of outcomes necessarily evidence of a lack of discrimination. Differential outcomes can be generated by both universalistic and particularistic processes, a point discussed by Cole and Fiorentine (1991). For example, women or minorities may on average receive less prestigious jobs because they are less productive. This would be a universalistic process. Or, women or minorities may receive less prestigious jobs than white men with equal productivity as a result of discrimination, which would be a particularistic process. Of course, both universalistic and particularistic processes may be operating simultaneously. Alternatively, if there were no sex or race differences in the average prestige of first jobs, it would be premature to conclude that there was no discrimination since women and minorities could be more productive than white men.

One strategy to neutralise the ethnic barrier is develop a sense of ethnic identity as a developmental task that may greatly influence the process of career development among ethnic minority individuals (Fouad and Arbona, 1994).